

---

# **Birla Central Library**

**PILANI (Jaipur State)**

**Class No :- 916.8**

**Book No :- H985**

**Accession No :- 31805**

---







## THE SORCERER'S APPRENTICE

By the same Author



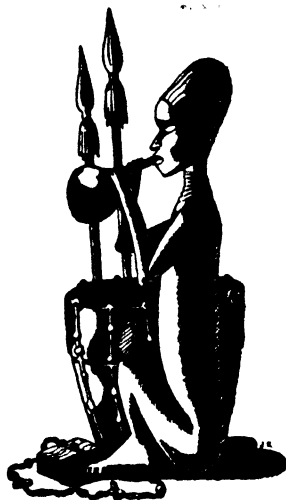
RED STRANGERS  
ATLANTIC ORDEAL  
THE WALLED CITY

# THE SORCERER'S APPRENTICE

A Journey through East Africa

by

ELSPETH HUXLEY



1948

CHATTO AND WINDUS

L O N D O N

PUBLISHED BY  
Chatto & Windus  
LONDON  
★  
Clarke, Irwin & Company Ltd  
TORONTO

THIS BOOK IS PRODUCED IN COMPLETE  
CONFORMITY WITH THE AUTHORIZED  
ECONOMY STANDARDS  
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Lucrates seeing Pancrates an Egyptian Magician do a great many Wonders, insinuated himself into his Friendship, and communicated all his Secrets to him. The Magician at length persuaded him to leave all his family at Memphis, and to follow him alone; and after they came to their Inn, he took a Bar or a Broom, and wrapped it with Clouts, and by his Charms made it serve them in several Respects, as in drawing of Water etc. Then with another Charm he would turn it into a Bat, a Bar, or a Broom again. And one day when Pancrates was gone into the Market, Lucrates must needs imitate his Familiar, and dressed the Bar or Pestle, and muttered the Words, and commanded it to draw Water; and when it had drawn enough, commanded it to turn into a Bar or Pestle again; but it would not obey, but still drew Water; till he was afraid of drowning; then he took a Saw, and sawed the Bar in two, and then both Parts began to draw Water, and pour it plentifully, 'till in comes Pancrates, and turned it into what it was at first, and so left his Fellow, and then was never seen after of him.

*A Compleat History of Magick, Sorcery,  
and Witchcraft.* BOULTON, 1715, Vol. I.



# Contents

## PART I KENYA

	PAGE
NAIROBI	2
A patchwork architecture—Indian predominance—crime and plenty— —the Overlanders.	
MTITO ANDEI	4
The road to Mombasa—a violent storm—Mac's Camp.	
MALINDI	6
A gay ferry—chocolate breakers and dancing crabs—'goggling'— Walt Disney corals—Casuarina Point.	
GEDI	8
A mysterious ruin—Persian or Arab?—why Gedi fell—a small- holders' settlement—cashew nuts—food versus cotton—breeding mosquitoes—the Coast's decline.	
MALINDI	13
Indolent Giriama—palm toddy—a lucky dhow-captain—the festival of Maulidi—Mambrui.	
LAMU	16
Dom-palms and topi—arrival at Shela—a modern Sodom—tea with the Liwali—self-help for Lamuans—Coconut Charlie—the horn of Siwa—an Arab School—the <i>mumiami</i> —'The Wifely Duty'.	
MALINDI	25
Sea-borne bananas—the sentence-server—an Indian ginnery—the Sheikh's bus.	
MOMBASA	27
Africans and Asians—the Arab school—a cultural outpost—three stages in housing—four cents for prestige—the Teita co-op.— a Government housing scheme—Tononoka social hall—African 'nippies'—uneconomic rents—an Indian viewpoint—Indian fecundity —African aspirations—Fort Jesus—the story of Yusuf—the siege of Fort Jesus—the Mackinnon Concession—German trickery—the Char- tered Company—Kilindini harbour.	
KILIMA KIU	40
A farm in the Highlands—Banks and farmers—water from boreholes —'squatters'—a thin green line—squatter management—surplus children.	



## CONTENTS

	PAGE
<b>MACHAKOS</b>	44
A tortured landscape—too little and too late—the de-stocking fiasco of 1938—men must go—Africans want the 'White Highlands'—shortage of land.	
<b>MAKUENI</b>	48
Overcoming the tsetse—a waterless country—attempted sabotage—returns in frankincense—doom of game.	
<b>NAIROBI</b>	51
Pumwani—new housing estates—municipal self-government—the African Advisory Council—'hotelis'—the Kenya African Union—the social colour bar—Indian political overtures—anti-Government tactics—the vernacular press—African political leaders—the United Kenya Club—East African Industries—lack of skilled labour—low spending power—locusts—a scientific conquest.	
<b>KABETE</b>	67
Veterinary research—the conquest of rinderpest—training of ex-soldiers—effects of Army life—African tradesmen—soldiers into teachers—rewards for 'social consciousness'—welfare workers—the Alliance High School—the backwardness of women—circumcision of girls—Sheridan in Africa.	
<b>NAIROBI</b>	76
Tea with Dr. Nathoo—high Indian standard of living—Indian political demands—fashions in saris.	

## PART II TANGANYIKA

<b>MOSHI</b>	80
The Wa-Chagga—a call on Chief Petro—native coffee growing—amalgamation of chiefdoms—Joseph's mansion—legends of Kilimanjaro.	
<b>LYAMUNGU</b>	83
Research on coffee cultivation—high-yielding clones—twelve million better trees.	
<b>MOSHI</b>	85
The Kilimanjaro Native Co-operative Union—past troubles—the Moshi Native Coffee Board—a democratic structure—reasons for Chagga success—Chief Abdiel, M.L.C.—bride-price customs—a glimpse of the Masai.	
<b>ARUSHA</b>	89
The papain boom—the frustration of Mr. Frank Anderson—decline of native honesty—treatment of labour—discouragement of new settlers—a resourceful cook—two Masai cattle thieves—'Masai-itis'—the Serengeti lions—lion photography—Lake Duluti—the road to Tanga—laments of an Indian taxi-driver.	

# CONTENTS

PAGE

## TANGA

101

A sisal baron—polyglot labour—Tanganyika versus Kenya outlook—labour shortages—Silabu—housing and welfare—a twenty-three hour week—the Mawia—a village survey—a graduated tax experiment—‘the pork-pie hat on the street corner’—home and school at cross-purposes—apprentices—diet and intelligence.

## PART III ZANZIBAR

110

The Stone Town—rope-making in the Old Harbour—‘no racialism’—Government housing—Ngambo, the African quarter—the Purdah Club—the House of Wonders—Seyyid Sir Khalifa bin Harub—the Arab minority—constitutional complexities—‘sudden death’ of cloves—Seyyid Barghash’s cocoa trees—the marketing of cloves—the Shariff family.

## PART IV TANGANYIKA

### DAR ES SALAAM

121

A tidy capital—meeting with the intelligentsia—political backwardness—the African Association—rising cost of living—do pawnbrokers benefit Africans?—a Moslem school—John Rupia’s delegation—tea with Mr. Nazerali—‘Hands off Tanganyika’—hatred of Kenya—colour bar resentment—the ‘Tanganyika course’.

### MINAKI

130

The Universities Mission to Central Africa—Dr. Gibbons’s hospital—‘educated witchdoctors’—the influence of Canon Gibbons—‘a generation of clerks’—beri-beri and the pawpaw seed.

### KONGWA

133

Discovery of paludrine—through Morogoro and Kilosa—the ground-nut camp—waiting for bulldozers—impenetrable bush—a present of ground-nuts—Wagogo customs—labour troubles—performance of three bulldozers—peasant farming and the modern state—the virtues of nationalism—five eggs a penny.

### MPWAPWA

141

Veterinary experiments—the virtues of grass—Wagogo ghee-posts.

### GULWE—TABORA

144

Dodoma and the Southern Highlands—official policy and white settlement—the ‘lion men’ of Singida—the sacred tree—the grip of witchcraft—a bush democracy—‘the good of the African.’

# CONTENTS

PAGE

## TABORA

151

The Wanyamwezi—native treasures—visit to a chieftainess—the dilemma of indirect rule—changes of policy—native docility—a witchdoctor's cruel remedy—the Government school—popularity of medical careers—the girls' boarding school—the lion in the nun's lavatory.

## NZEGA

159

A native hospital—Dr. and Mrs. Mwaisela—a social centre.

## SHINYANGA

162

A modern Kimberley—Dr. Williamson—an unromantic mine—the labour compound—Chief Kidaha, M.L.C.—bride-price and overstocking—'If this were Russia . . .'—a primary school—shortage of teachers—suggestions for a new curriculum.

## OLD SHINYANGA

169

Studying the tsetse—Swynnerton's methods—discriminative clearing—game and 'fly'—complexities of control.

## TINDE

173

Labs on a shoestring—a home-made micro-camera—immunity to sleeping sickness—a pregnant discovery—sleeping-sickness volunteers—complete recovery.

## MALYA

176

A plan come true—the Sukuma Federation—democracy and hereditary chiefs—how to absorb the educated—overpopulation—Sukuma-land Development—a mighty dam—an evening's fishing.

## MWANZA

181

German origins—beer-gardens—gold-mining—British justice—a murdered witch—a duel between witchdoctors—the price of rice.

## UKIRIGURU

186

Cotton growing in Sukumaland—how to treble yields—tie-ridging—'white man's business'—search for good grasses—school of agricultural instructors—compulsion or propaganda?

## BUKOBA

190

A tropical landscape—a chiefs' council—coffee marketing—the export of prostitutes—the liberty of the female subject—drunkenness of the male—too much prosperity?—the White Fathers—an English nun—an uphill struggle.

# PART V UGANDA

The roads improve—a change of atmosphere—the Banyaruanda—a press-gang at Masaka. 196

# CONTENTS

PAGE

## MBARARA

197

The Bahima—milk-fed rulers—fattened brides—a native autocracy—the structure of local government—a bloodless revolution—the advance of the tsetse—mechanical transmission—Kakitumba bridge—‘we love you, we cleanse you’—the trek from Ruanda.

## KABALE

204

Smiling Kigezi—virtues of strip-cropping—progressive Bakiga—increase of population—African settlers—poultry pioneers—the game recedes—the Birunga volcanoes—the ‘father of teeth’—Miss Hornby—increase in adultery—collapse of tribal discipline—training ex-soldiers—a remote flax factory—peasant economics—Lake Bunyoni—native medicine—The White Horse Inn.

## KICHWAMBA

217

Sixty elephants before breakfast—innocent lions—a piscatorial puzzle.

## KATWE

219

Native fishermen—independence versus efficiency—exploitation of the waters—two elephants at close quarters—the salt lake—a native industry.

## FORT PORTAL

223

The hidden peaks of Ruwenzori—King Kasagama of Toro—call on the Mukama—elephant fever—indolence and tyranny—a hookworm story—the Semliki valley—the Mountains of the Moon—rain-forest—pygmies—the ghouls and the pygmy—the market at Bundibugyo—Nubian gin.

## HOIMA

231

The ruler’s insignia—relics of past glories—the *m’pango*—immigrants welcomed—Bunyoro eighty years ago—Samuel Baker and King Kamrasi.

## MASINDI

235

An Englishman’s plantation—Baker’s discovery of Lake Albert—the Budongo forest—a timber famine—mvule and mahogany—a Polish camp.

## GULU

239

The Murchison Falls—the Acholi—Bantu and Nilote—the boredom of the bush—thwarted emotions—the Acholi Association—a club for the élite—Antonio and World Books—a friendly young woman—a drift from the centre—‘the paradise of Africa’—Samuel Baker’s campaign against slavery—a rain-maker’s story—the Roman Catholic Cathedral.

## LIRA

247

Queues for water—dwindling cattle herds—a medical school for ex-soldiers—the village craftsman.

# CONTENTS

	PAGE
<b>SOROTI</b>	249
Progressive Teso—a racket in adultery—a chief with 100 wives— introduction of democracy—Serere—the limits of peasant agriculture —Makerere students—the trials of Christians—the Kumi leper camp —hopes of recovery—a sentence for rape—Miss Laing.	
<b>MBALE</b>	255
A bus monopoly—Mt. Elgon—peasant coffee planters—a metropolis of bats—a cattle-raid—the Karamajong—advice from the Hadhramaut—prospects of irrigation.	
<b>JINJA</b>	259
Rock phosphates—Indian sugar plantations—Speke's discovery of Ripon Falls—Speke and Burton—the sleeping-sickness epidemic of 1900-05—Dr. Worthington's Development Plan—Busoga pilot schemes—shortage of tackle—mobile welfare teams—the civilised Baganda.	
<b>MAKERERE HILL</b>	265
A future University—intellectual leaders—demand for degrees—a thwarted lawyer—the Art School—a talented sculptor—Tombo the Masai—women students—no word for ecstasy—the speed of progress.	
<b>KAMPALA</b>	273
The Katikiro—dangerous politics—visit to a parish council—a gom- bolola—the Kago—letter from the opposition—the clan system—the Buganda parliament—Speke's 'discovery' of Buganda—early history —treaties with the British—'mailo' lands—rich landowners—no in- come tax—declining soil fertility—crumb structure—grass leys— Robusta coffee—Baganda fashions—'lazy natives'—tea with the intelligentsia—plea for direct rule—newspaper editors—hostility to Kenya—secret societies and Nubian gin—Mulago Hospital—medical students—Namirembe and Sir Albert Cook—a foundation stone.	
<b>ENTEBBE</b>	293
A sheltered garden city—DDT experiments—attacks on the tsetse.	

## PART VI KENYA

<b>KISUMU</b>	295
A change of tempo—Apolo Ohanga, M.L.C.—Local Native Coun- cils—Maseno—DARA—model small-holdings—two beasts to the acre—the Bukura idea—a propaganda failure—the submerged <i>linguru</i> —Butere market.	
<b>KAKAMEGA</b>	301
An African D.O.—inequalities of pay—self-help unpopular— Broderick Falls—an egg centre—Kitosh maize—prevalence of arson— new villages—an L.N.C. election—dangers of demagoguery—a Native Tribunal in action—an African divorce—native theories of law— Kakamega hospital—malignant malnutrition.	

# CONTENTS

	PAGE
<b>KAPSABET</b>	312
The Nandi L.N.C.—Chief Elijah—a New Jerusalem—a caste of magicians—rain-makers—the Nandi devil—Baraton stock farm—introduction of dipping—full pockets and no cycles—reasons for success.	
<b>KERICHO</b>	318
Marrying off magicians—tea estates—war on bed-bugs—balanced feeding—popular factory work—smug camelia—a piquant flavour.	
<b>LONDIANI</b>	322
Open downland—a forest station—a prophet of softwoods—‘the Scandinavia of the East’—the squatter system—holidays for furniture.	
<b>NJORO</b>	326
The late Lord Delamere—Ngata—mixed farming—progress in forty years—the Egerton Farm School—new settlers’ wives—foundation stock—economic importance of European farming—unsoundness of peasant agriculture—African claims to White Highlands—fear of Indian expansion—the European reserve—the Malthusian threat—the Millingtons—the Kamasia reserve—Young Man Saltbush.	
<b>NAKURU</b>	337
A market town—the European school—the racial question—the heirs of leisure—a native brewery—Nakuru Industries—an efficient hospital—the K.F.A.—Thomson’s Falls—a 50,000 acre ranch—merinos and hyenas.	
<b>NARO MORU</b>	345
Below Mount Kenya—a barley tragedy—labour’s declining efficiency—artificial insemination.	
<b>KARATINA</b>	348
The Dried Vegetable Project—United Companies of Mumbi—a Russian reply.	
<b>EMBU</b>	351
A home-made school—plethora of ‘taxis’—a coffee-planting clerk—a budding co-op.—African ‘spivs’—the Boy Scouts’ good deed.	
<b>FORT HALL</b>	354
Dr. Lincoln’s hospital—Dr. Likimani—indigenous land control—growth of individualism—communal terracing—Chief Ignatio—secret societies—Kandara centre—Chief Njiri, M.B.E., and John Chege—a soft environment.	
<b>NAIROBI</b>	361
Rampant crime—Olgoresailie—a Stone Age factory—bolas stones— <i>gorgops</i> and the Masai—Proconsul of Rusinga island—reflections on colonial policy—homeward bound.	



# Illustrations

*Unless otherwise stated, all photographs are by the author*

PLATE		PAGE
1	Silt on the Sabaki: results of soil erosion Grand Canyons in embryo: gulleying in Kamasia	14
2	Giriama women bring cotton for sale Interior of a ginnery, Malindi	15
3	Arab boy Old Portuguese fort, Lamu	30
4	A woman of Mambrui Door of Native Hospital, Malindi	31
5	Fort Jesus, Mombasa Ruined Arab mansion, Lamu island	46
6	Ex-slave making twine: African settlement, Gedi	47
7	Kilima Kiu	62
8	Contour ditching in Machakos Reserve	63
9	The Masai at home Masai warriors playing 'bao'	94
10	Zebras on the Serengeti Giraffes near Namanga	95
11	Dhow captain A worker in leather	110
12	Produce market, Zanzibar	111
13	Chagga Chief Abdiel Shangali, Member of Legislative Council	126
14	Bush into groundnuts: bulldozers near Kongwa A Gogo homestead	127
15	Kilimanjaro Sukumaland, near Ukiriguru	142
16	The Bismarck Rocks, Mwanza A tea-shop in Dar es Salaam	143



# ILLUSTRATIONS

17	Lion with leg of zebra, Serengeti Serengeti lions	174
18	Acholi village Banyaruanda labour trekking into Uganda	175
19	An Acholi welcome A young Acholi	190
20	Kalawa Kagwa, Prime Minister of Buganda A Masai art student: Tombo at Makerere	191
21	"Women in the Field" "The Hunter", by Gregory Maloba <i>By courtesy of Makerere College</i>	254
22	"Death", by Gregory Maloba <i>By courtesy of Makerere College</i>	255
23	Lake Nakuru, with flamingoes <i>By courtesy of Martin Johnston</i>	270
24	Elephants Hippos <i>By courtesy of Paul Popper</i>	271
25	Locusts: Kavirondo Province <i>By courtesy of Gervas Huxley</i> Ploughing in the Highlands	302
26	Chief Ignatio—new style Chief Karethii—old style	303
27	Kikuyu elder At the market, N. Kavirondo	318
28	Plucking tea at Kericho Modern African housing on a Kericho tea estate	319
29	A school for farm workers' children School for spinners	334
30	Open-air milking on a settler's farm, Naro Moru Kamasia cattle, stunted from prolonged over-stocking	335
31	View on a farm Main road in the rains: Fort Hall to Embu	350
32	A baraza in Kamasia Clerk to the Justices: Native Tribunal clerk, N. Kavirondo Map at end	351

## Introduction

I REMEMBER once, reading a book about (I think) early days in New Zealand, being struck by the remark that to describe the country was like trying to draw a galloping horse; long before you had depicted your object, it had moved on.

It is very much the same with East Africa—with most places, I dare say, to-day. Things change almost overnight, and, in the long gap between observation and print, events occur to rob one's profoundest findings of their validity.

In these pages I have tried to do no more than to take a snapshot of the galloping horse. This is what parts of East Africa—I missed out far more than I was able to see—looked like to a single traveller, in the usual nonsensical hurry of our time, between February and June, 1947. Before the picture appears in print the horse will have galloped on, but if the snapshot catches its appearance at the moment of the shutter's release, it will have done all that it set out to do.

The journey with which it is concerned was made, as I have said, in a hurry, and a great deal of the evidence derives from 'what the soldier said.' The remarks and opinions expressed to me as I went along are quoted from memory—I took no shorthand notes—and are not meant to be *verbatim* statements. They are intended rather to express the general sense of these remarks and opinions, at least as I apprehended it, and if some of them appear to their original authors garbled or unrecognisable, I would like to beg forgiveness, and to admit the fault as mine.

In all the four East African territories I enjoyed the most open-handed and friendly hospitality from all sorts and conditions of people, and met with helpfulness, often from over-worked and hard-pressed individuals, on all sides. I should like to put on record my gratitude to all those whose brains I tried to pick and whose food and drink I did consume; and to thank especially the distinguished Governors of the three territories—Sir Philip Mitchell, Sir William Battershill and Sir John Hall—and the no less distinguished Resident of Zanzibar, Sir Vincent Glenday, for their personal interest, and for the courtesy and helpfulness of their Administrations. Without official sanction a visitor would not, indeed, be debarred from travelling with his eyes and ears open, but to see even the little that I was able to

## INTRODUCTION

see would take far longer, be infinitely more difficult and cost a great deal more.

There are still wild places to be found in Africa, lonely deserts, empty forests, hunted game and primitive tribes; they still beguile and satisfy, but they are vanishing, and it is not of them that I have tried to write. They belong to the old Africa, and I looked for the new; eschewing lions, I talked with clerks—less splendid, but more potent in this turbulent and groping age which is rolling over Africa. The reader in search of jungle-noises must go elsewhere; this is a book about the beaten track.

January, 1948

## *Part One*

# KENYA

**B**ELOW lay the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, dun-coloured, broken, seemingly illimitable. Peering down into the bumpy heat the idea that nations should contend for such wastelands appeared merely daft. That green snake uncoiled below us on the brown, with its narrow strake of silver, gave the answer. And a trim-suited man beside me with a black hat and brief-case, bound for Khartoum, travelled at the beck of those eternal waters, as much a servant of the Nile as ancient Pharaohs who also sought to be its master.

"You could tell he was a Foreign Office man," said another companion, over Atbara, "by the way he helped himself to butter. Did you notice? He calculated his exact share and took it with precision. And it just matched his roll—no loose ends. . . ."

At Khartoum it was pleasant to stand in the cool of the evening on the Nile's margin looking down into that thick slow-moving stream and over to the flat, low bank pencilled across the sky, while river-craft with their long masts leaning back like plumes before a wind went past slowly, and behind one, in the dust under the trees, strolled the soft-footed and white-robed Sudanese.

It was pleasant to walk before nightfall in the zoo over green watered lawns shaded all day from the sun's bite and to find yourself in a child's world of fantasy, where small spotted deer frisk at liberty and pelicans waddle with self-important gait and steel-blue cranes in their golden crests stalk with the detached air of scholars. Here I watched a young elephant taking peanuts one by one from a boy's hand, giving each time a little flick of his trunk, and saw the ball of the sun drop suddenly behind the hard edge of a dead-flat horizon with all the exuberant redness of the desert. In twenty minutes the dusk had quite dissolved, lights quivered on the silken surface of the river and, on the busy terrace of the Grand Hotel, the silver-smiths and leather-workers of Omdurman crouched beside their wares.

At the airport Sudanese officials, black, burly and smartly uniformed, gazed dubiously at a stuffed owl, clasped by a small boy going back to school in Kenya, but let it pass. As we flew south, the desolation below gave way to a spare and speckled landscape with a trace of life in it:

## KENYA

scrub and bush, here and there cattle-tracks scoured out by floods winding down to the green margins of the river. Here, below us, the long-legged, naked tribes of the Upper Nile, Dinka and Shilluk and Nuer, still preserve against the ferments of a world in dissolution their close-knit virile society.

The colour of the country turned from eau-de-nil into a true green, and we were over Uganda: at first open bushlands with no humanity, then the thatched roofs typical of Central Africa, the vivid green of banana trees and smoke rising from clustered homesteads. Then the wide shining surface of a great lake and fishing boats beneath us instead of flocks of goats; then land again, and, for the first time since leaving Europe, the tumbled broken crests of mountains.

Soon we were flying through cloud, now piercing white swirls into a secret world of twilit obscurity, now coming out into bright sunlight and seeing under us the crumpled ranges and the cold forests of the Mau. Here and there our shadow, flickering over the dark tree-tops, crossed, so one imagined, smooth meadows of pale and brilliant green. One looked in vain for cattle, goats, signs of life; all was still; these were no meadows, only the close-packed feathery foliage of bamboo.

More cloud, and hints through it of sun-flooded plains and valleys deep-scoured into the earth's crust; then, all at once, treeless hills more thickly packed than Devonshire with humans, and with a soil of the same beefy red. The clusters of little huts, each round as a pin's head, scattered over the landscape resemble pimples, the red eroded hillsides a festering rash on the flesh of Africa.

## NAIROBI

This town first strikes the eye as an orderly array of roofs in rusty corrugated iron straggling over the dusty edge of a plain, with dark patches of trees. Too many of these, you see as your B.O.A.C. bus approaches, are eucalyptus, not without a certain beauty in the patchwork grey-and-silver of their barks but, on the whole, rather dingy. Then, turning into the wide Delamere Avenue, you see the margins dusted with a sprinkle of petals fallen from jacarandas, each smothered as thick as hawthorn in soft bluebell-coloured bloom.

Six-storeyed hotels and spacious cream-plastered, red-tiled offices have sprouted from an underbrush of wooden bungalows, close-packed Indian shops and native shacks. Nairobi has passed without time to gather the least moss of tradition from the status of a pioneer market-town to that of the commercial—and, now, political—capital

## INDIAN PREDOMINANCE

of a region inhabited by thirteen million people. Such forced growth could bring no grace or dignity, only a sort of hectic boom-town vitality which at its best may stimulate and at its worst depress by a kind of pretentious self-sufficiency.

This is among the Europeans. The population of roughly 100,000 is compounded of six parts African to three parts Indian to one part European. Yet Nairobi strikes one mainly as an Indian city. The white man administers and trades, the black man is drawn to the crowd and the hope of riches as pins to a magnet, but the brown man works and breeds with a fervour unknown to either. Indians own most of the property and handle most of the trade; caring less for leisure than their fellow-citizens and asking less of life, they wax and prosper, and yearly impress more deeply upon the town the stamp of banian minds.

To the eye, Nairobi glitters: sunlight flashes on windscreens and on the shiny paint of cars angle-parked as close as fish-bones; it bounces off tarmac and pavement, strikes on plate-glass windows, picks out specks of quartz in grey stone buildings and the biscuit-coloured dust. Nairobi sounds cacophonous and varied; walk down the street and you may hear Hindustani and Gujerati, Swahili and English, Kikuyu and Luo, with perhaps German, Polish or Italian thrown in.

It is a town of contrasts: of cinemas, dance-clubs, nine-o'clock dinners and evening dress, and of peasant women coming in to market bent low under bags of grain and bunches of bananas. Ten years ago, even, such vendors would have been clad in goatskins with coils of wire on arms and ankles; to-day they wear cotton Mother Hubbards or cast-off European dresses, the bourgeois African his khaki suit, his collar and tie, his spectacles and topce. (A colour-blind visitor could almost tell African from European by this, that the pale-skin goes bare-headed and the dark man decently hatted.) Most of these are clerks, trying to be kings on the pay of scullions, but some do better: it is perhaps a sign of the times that a trading site was bought the other day for £15,000 by a group of Africans.

Crime is so rampant that cars lose batteries, tyres and magnetos overnight; even the tops of petrol tanks vanish in an instant; prudent householders keep loaded shotguns by their bedsides. The return of ex-soldiers, who often learnt more skullduggery than discipline in the Army, is blamed, and the fact that Nairobi draws to it every scallywag in Kenya and many from farther afield.

The plenty fills the eye. You see it at once in the shops with their piles of fruit, their displays of fancy cakes and confectionery, their fine hams and legs of lamb and trussed turkeys, their cases of butter and

## KENYA

chests of tea and fat cheeses—local produce, all of it, as good as the world can offer. You see it most of all, perhaps, in the municipal market. This centre is brilliant with massed flowers brought in by market gardeners: lilies and delphiniums, roses and violets, sweet peas and dahlias and golden-rod, carnations and penstemons and every other variety you can think of. On each hand Indians press upon you mangoes, oranges and grapefruit, plums and apples, pineapples and avocado pears, all in unrationed profusion. Only imported things are short—nails, cement, wire, engines. At every turn of the screw in Britain, Europeans here grow more ruefully conscious of their good fortune and the food shops do a heavy business in overseas parcels.

Drawn up in Delamere Avenue under the jacarandas (where, from an island, a lean bronze Delamere gazes wistfully towards the bar of Torr's Hotel), a battered truck collected a small crowd. A young woman in slacks and a small child were tidying up their dusty living-quarters in the back of the truck and by its side a couple of young men in black beards and slouch hats screwed up their eyes against the glare of unaccustomed pavements.

These were Overlanders, just in from Newcastle-on-Tyne. Their truck was scrawled over with jaunty slogans and the names of the places they had come through: Tobruk, Benghazi—familiar names, for these men had fought at Alamein—and then strange ones: Wadi Halfa, Rejaf, Nimule, Jinja.

"No, no trouble," said one of the young men in a North Country accent. "Couple of punctures, that's all. Costs money, though. All my gratuity's in this, and my pals'—and all our savings. We're seven in truck, all told. We'll just squeeze through, I reckon, if our luck holds."

Like most Overlanders, they were bound for Johannesburg. The distance from Newcastle is between six and seven thousand miles. Their capital, if they get there, will be their skill at a trade—all are artisans of some description—the spirit which set them on the road and the persistence which got them there.

"I had a taste of Africa in the desert," said one of the black-beards. "Didn't seem to settle back, somehow."

Next day they headed south, latest of a long line of Englishmen to rate opportunity above safety.

## MTITO ANDEI

The road to Mombasa is good, as quality is reckoned here: good enough, at any rate, to allow us to make our way without mishap

## THE ROAD TO MOMBASA

through steep and rocky hills in the midst of a most ferocious rain-storm. The world was blotted out, there was nothing to be done but halt while a wall of rain encompassed us like a whirlwind, drowning all lesser sounds with its battering.

In this quick storm, quite out of season, six inches fell in Nairobi in a few hours. By the roadside, as the fury subsided, we could see soil torn from the hillsides pouring in chocolate torrents down gullies towards the riverbeds, and understand what those who fight soil erosion are up against.

Yet on the plains below these hills, the great rolling steppes of Masailand, all was sunlit and serene, and a plume of red dust bellied out behind our wheels.

Erosion of another sort has changed this lower landscape from deep-grassed veld into a red half-desert sprinkled with tufts of spindly annual grasses, with here and there a low shrub the colour of rosemary. We could find no shade to eat our lunch in beneath the little spiky thorn-trees. The nests of weaver-birds dangled in scores from twisted branches. Where do birds in such places find water? In the dry weather pools evaporate, rivers disappear, yet birds are plentiful. Flocks of desert starlings with red breasts and backs of metallic blue crossed and re-crossed the road, hoopoes with their high crests and striped plumage flopped clumsily from tree to tree, and swallows gathered on the single telegraph line as they do in England—perhaps for the return journey.

After Kibwezi this bare, open, sad country with its grass all eaten away gives place to thick rhino bush, creased with dry sandy gullies and decorated at present (for rains have fallen) with tall hibiscus flowers mottled like foxgloves, and sweet-smelling white jasmine creeping incongruously over spiky thorns. This is tsetse country. Paradoxically, that fly which is among man's stubbornest enemies has saved huge regions of countryside from destruction at his own rapacious hands.

Almost exactly half-way between Nairobi and Mombasa, Mac's Camp at Mtito Andei lies in the very midst of uninhabited country, far from water. Only spiky bush and migrating game and the birds can flourish in this barren wilderness. Yet in the evening, fresh from a wallow in unrestricted hot water, we sat down in the little open-sided dining-room to a succulent five-course meal with fresh vegetables, tender leg of lamb and such luxuries as ice cream. This miracle is achieved by the railway, which sells every drop of water to the camp from its piped supply at 2/- a thousand gallons and brings fresh produce from the slopes of Mt. Kenya, 300 miles away.



## KENYA

"Yet people groused like fury when the eggs didn't turn up for three days," said the manager: a competent young Kenya-born woman whose husband, a white hunter, takes guests out to see and photograph game in what is to become a National Park, if the long-spun-out delays which have hitherto stifled this project are ever ended.<sup>1</sup> For 30/- if you are one of a party, or £5 if alone, you go forth at dawn with Mr. Hartley in a truck in search of elephant and rhino. If you see neither, you pay nowt.

## MALINDI

Between Mombasa and Malindi you are ferried across two creeks. Ten or a dozen ferrymen in the most tattered collection of shreds and wisps of cloth imaginable (though given uniforms, they naturally prefer to work in their second-best) haul at a chain which spans the creek and is moored at intervals to floating oil drums; the men chant a song and stamp their feet; at the climax of the journey, the foreman blows into a conch, everyone shouts and stamps harder than ever, and to a crescendo of excitement your barge gently noses into the bank. As you drive off, the ferrymen sink back into gentle lethargy in the shelter of a hut.

Gaiety here is indigenous, speed exotic. The sun sparkles on a blue ocean and pours with intensity on to dense dry bush and dusty road, forcing men to seek shade and hammering the very vigour from their blood. From the road you can see little but bush and forest. Here and there your eye is caught by a flower whose creamy, wax-like petals are fringed with deep flamingo-pink, and whose soft fragility seems strangely at variance with its harsh surroundings, even with the fleshy spikes on which it is borne. This is the *adenia*, a desert plant whose water-storing bulb is so heavy that two men are needed to lift it.

Small palm-thatched houses stand in a wide arc above Malindi bay within sound of breaking chocolate-coloured rollers—brown with the topsoil of the highlands washed hundreds of miles down the Sabaki river. The mouth of this river lies four miles north, yet the whole bay is red with particles of soil, millions of tons of it held in suspension.

A wind off the sea blows all day long, keeping the air fresh; and when it drops at night the breakers subside into wavelets which spill on to the sand gently, their moonlit crests the colour of Ovaltine. In

<sup>1</sup>They have been. In January, 1948, an area of 7,000 square miles in this region and beyond was proclaimed the Tsavo National Park.

## ‘GOGGLING’

front dance the little crabs, in such multitudes that the whole beach seems agog with them; where the waves spread out in a fine film they dart in, gliding sideways like ballet-dancers in crinolines.

These little monsters wear their eyes on the end of long springy stalks. Sometimes, as if in contemplation, a crab will put up its front claws, pull down the stalks and then rub its hands together, while the eyes spring back into place. At night in the quiet moonlight on this deserted beach they dance in and out of the waves as swiftly as dragon-flies, until the tremor of one's foot on the wet sand sends them scuttling into a thousand invisible burrows. They are queer and exquisite, and the purpose of their nightly ballet is to snatch morsels of offal from the waves.

Dawn over Malindi bay is monochromatic, in all shades of steel-blue and indigo. The sea is like grey silk, the sky dark, but pale blue above a marine horizon, and light puffy clouds of heliotrope hang over the water. To-day the moon was a silver thread, the old moon in its arms; over it shone a bright morning star; to the right, the light-house winked with steadfast tranquillity, all was gentle and still. Then salmon-pink intruded and the monochrome quality of an early water-colour faded; in a few minutes the sun burst forth and the first bathers ran down the beach to meet the waves before they lost their bite.

This was the day for goggling. We drove first down an avenue of flamboyants whose brilliant scarlet flowers burnt like fires in the green branches, overtaking as we went the morning procession of Giriama women marching in with baskets of frothy white cotton on their heads. These women, naked to the waist, wear short skirts apparently made of palm-leaves, but actually of cloth cunningly pleated to resemble the older and traditional material. They look sleek and sturdy, but their figures are clumsy.

My Swedish companion, a sort of Viking burnt mahogany-colour by this equatorial sun (by trade a coffee planter near Nairobi), keeps a small canoe which he fashioned from a seaplane's float. We pushed this little vessel through shallow water as warm as a bath and chugged out to the reef.

A Swahili proverb says: "Where there are breakers, there is also a door through the reef."

The question is always to find the door; many wrecks along these coral barriers are the gravestones of vessels who failed; but the Viking did not hesitate and we passed safely over, leaving behind us the long creamy line of foam that, at low tide, marks the reef.

It was low tide now. The boat was anchored. Wearing heavy

## KENYA

goggles, we swam over the rock-pools on our tummies, our faces thrust into the sea.

A fantastic, unimagined world lay under water: a Walt Disney world of corals, some waving like plumes, some fixed like calcified brains, all in pink and beige and carmine; a world of fishes of brilliant colourings and bizarre shapes. In and out of the mountain ranges and deep caverns of coral swam these little fishes: one plum-brown with two broad bands of light blue and orange feathery fins, another with blue peacocks'-feather eyes on fins and tail. Some were slim, some square, some waved long graceful bristles; butterfly fish, angel fish, box fish, zebra fish—scores of different kinds. Tiny powder-blue creatures hovered in shoals over clumps of coral and melted away into crevices before our shadows.

Bigger shapes darted by twenty or thirty feet under water, and after these the Viking vanished, clasping a harpoon. He pursued them into a great cave, disappearing completely into the bowels of the sea for so long that I felt sure he had stuck in the caverns and drowned; as I began to look anxiously for bubbles, his feet appeared and he swam out backwards, two plaice-like fishes wriggling on his spear. They were a vivid orange covered with electric-blue spots. He threw them into the canoe, and their colour died with them; in a few minutes all the brilliance had gone, they had become a drab and ordinary brown.

Off Casuarina Point the sea is so warm that you can spend all day in it, climbing out to rest now and again on a nobbly rock of coral or to suck an orange in the boat. Sun, not cold, is the enemy. Those with white unhardened skins must go warily until they have baked themselves, little by little, to the Viking's mahogany.

The water round the horn of the bay is so limpid that you can see every waving branch of coral fathoms deep, and the spots, bars and whiskers of every fish. You enter an Aladdin's cave of brilliance and romance seen from a hot sea-bath under a blue sky with the sun and the air all round you. If the world can offer greater pleasures, they must be far to seek.

Coming back, we ran for a while beside a dugout canoe full of native fishermen, and bought a lavender-blue crayfish with scarlet spots for two shillings.

## GEDI

The point about the ruins of Gedi is their mystery. Here once stood a great walled city, perhaps twenty miles round, with mosques and palaces and baths whose grace and symmetry is yet conveyed across

## A MYSTERIOUS RUIN

the centuries by ruins under the trees. Shafts of old monuments rise among the undergrowth, tree-roots as thick as thighs entwine and penetrate among the masonry, owls fly out of dry wells whose depth can be gauged by the faint, long-delayed thud of a dropped pebble.

What happened to Gedi? Why was it left to fall into ruins? And why—this is far stranger—does no tradition of it linger on? It is marked on no map by Portuguese explorers and the Arabs who came to this coast about a thousand years ago have not even a name for it. Africans will not approach at night-time, believing it to be the haunt of spirits. And, indeed, as you sit in the ruins of the baths (in whose walls lamp-niches may still be discerned) under the dark canopy of forest trees whose roots are all the time and imperceptibly continuing their slow demolition, it is easy to believe that the ghosts of the dead inhabitants are not far away.

But ghosts of whom? Of Arabs, Persians, Chinese? Many theories have been spun over these ruins, and no archæologist has yet come here to dig and study. An amateur who has often prowled and speculated said:

"I sent a bit of an old tombstone back to the British Museum. The reply came that part of the inscription was in pure Persian, the rest in a Persian dialect used by verse-makers between A.D. 1000 and 1200, of which the key has been lost."

That it was a Persian city is the commonly held belief, and indeed it is a fact that Persian settlements were made on this coast in the ninth and tenth centuries. Yet there is no certain evidence, and Louis Leakey, Curator of the Coryndon Museum in Nairobi, after a brief visit announced it to be Arab in origin and to consist of at least three cities, one on top of the other. Kitchen middens have been stumbled upon five or six miles from the mosques and palaces which clearly formed the heart of the city. Gedi was a big place.

Why was it abandoned? Again, theories abound. Some say the drying up of the wells, some a fearful pestilence, and others the storming and obliteration of the town by raiding tribesmen. (Such a fate did, in fact, overtake certain Arab settlements.)

This amateur scabbler among the ruins has a different notion.

"On an old map of Vasco da Gama's," he said, "the mouth of the Sabaki river is placed roughly twenty miles further south than it is to-day. That would bring it pretty close to Gedi. Would a town of that size have depended for its water solely on wells? Not on your life; it was on a river; and sometime in the last six or seven hundred years, the Sabaki has changed its course."

## KENYA

That suggestion was borne out by a different explorer who, delving about at low tide in a muddy creek, came upon an old stone-faced wall, several feet below the mud's surface, which may once have formed part of an ancient wharf.

"The Sabaki often changes its course now," he said. "There's no reason to suppose it was in exactly the same place a thousand years ago."

If the water went, the people would have had to go too. Did this happen little by little, or did some chief or tyrant give the word? Was the town razed or did it slowly crumble? When was Gedi founded, and when decay? A host of questions, a virgin field, awaits the investigator. Until he comes, these questions hold something of the teasing perplexity of the riddle of the *Marie Celeste*.

Having dealt with the past, you may step across the way to look at the future, or what the future might be, for Gedi is the site of one of the first settlement schemes for Africans to be started in East Africa.

With Mr. Allen, the man in charge, I walked over what seemed to be pure sand, loose and silvery; yet this apparent desert will grow tremendous crops. The annual rainfall of 45 inches is concentrated mainly between April and August. 'Short rains', unreliable and erratic, fall in November and December, but the rest of the year is normally bone-dry.

"Our object," Mr. Allen said, "is to settle in permanent agriculture families at present illegally squatting up and down the coast on land not their own, and under no sort of contract." (Nearly all this coastal strip belongs to Indians, a little still to Arabs, the original owners.) "They're of all tribes, but mainly Giriama. We have ten thousand acres and mean to settle four hundred families to start with. Popular? Oh yes, we've a waiting list. People live well—comparatively—and make money here."

We stood in the necessary shade of an avenue of graceful cashew trees. Red or yellow fruits like elongated tomatoes hung from the branches; one's teeth bit into a soft pulp of remarkable and sweet juiciness, ice-cool in the hard heat. At the bottom of the elongated tomato dangled a small nut. For some peculiar reason, this wayward tree elects to bear its seed on the outside of the fruit instead of packing it neatly within.

"You eat the pulp and sell the nut," said Mr. Allen. "Cashew nuts used to be unsaleable, or at the most to fetch a cent a pound. Then a man at Kilifi got a monopoly and the price here at the roadside went

## A SMALLHOLDERS' SETTLEMENT

up to twelve cents a pound. Wrapped in cellophane, they sell at two-fifty a pound in Mombasa. But most of them go to America."

The settlers' houses are simple structures of mud-and-wattle thatched with palm-leaves. At one, an old man sat beside a little shelter which protected half a dozen sticks stuck in a mound of earth. Each stick represented an ancestor, and sometimes the old man would set out a little food or drink for the spirits.

"He's an ex-slave. Many of the Giriama were slaves and they've still got a good deal of the slave mentality—won't fend for themselves. Take coconuts, for instance. All the coconuts you see along this coast were planted by the Arabs. That means they're all more than fifty years old. They're beginning to die off and the people have scarcely planted a single coconut in the last half-century. Yet you've only got to stick in the nut and water it for a few years. I've started a nursery—pawpaws, custard apples, mangos and citrus fruit—and I've planted ten thousand coconuts so far. I give the seedlings away to settlers. . . . This old man here, the ex-slave, makes in cash at least eighty pounds a year."

"What does he do with it?"

"Oh, buys more wives. . . ."

Each settler has twelve acres, and must put one quarter of it under food crops in which cotton may be interplanted, and a further three acres under permanent crops like fruit, coconuts, mangoes or yams. The remaining six acres must rest under bush fallow, in rotation with the arable.

It is a struggle to get them to plant the food crops. Their notion is to plant cotton, which at present prices pays very well. At the start of the season, Mr. Allen addressed them earnestly on the food shortage and the absolute need to be self-supporting. They were unimpressed.

"It's quite all right," said their spokesman. "We've plenty of money to buy food at the dukas."

"But who will grow food to send to the dukas?"

The settlers looked blank. "There's *always* food in the dukas. . . ."

"Still, we push them into it," Mr. Allen added, "if we keep on and on. But if you stop pushing for an instant, everything slips back. During the war, an Indian took over—a good chap, and popular with the small-holders. By the end of the war everyone's twelve acres were under cotton and the settlers were on famine relief. Supervision is the essence of the game."

"People don't want to work at the coast," this young ex-farmer added. (Like many others, he left his farm to take part in the war and

## KENYA

found himself without capital at the end to re-start it.) "They want to sit in the sun and have everything brought to them. Who wouldn't? Take my carpentry course, for instance. I've got a first-rate African instructor. The idea is to teach the people—free—to make themselves things like doors and beds for their own use. But only about twenty people come, off and on, in a population of about five thousand.

"I've got an old Giriama friend, an ex-slave, almost the last man left alive who knows the art of carving old Arab doors. He made me a beauty. He's about ninety, and I want to get one or two young men to learn from him before he dies. It would take several years, but they'd be on to a good thing, and we could get a profitable little industry going. But no one will take it on. The young men say: 'Who will pay me for learning?'"

The settlement's centre is the nucleus of a village: a council-hall, a small dispensary, a cotton buying point and two pleasant little schools, both packed with round-eyed, woolly-headed brats learning from a Giriama teacher the mysteries of letters. The coast is fortunate in that its building materials, ready to hand, are cheap and sightly: coral rag plastered over with lime made from burnt coral and thatched with palm-leaves makes as pleasing, cool and clean a structure as you could wish for.

Scarcely an African on the coast escapes hookworm, bilharzia and malaria. (Two out of these three diseases can be as a rule prevented by simple measures, hookworm by using latrines, bilharzia by using clean wells, but few people make the necessary effort.) The women of the settlement draw their water from a covered-in, cemented well with a hand-pump to save them labour, and a medical orderly is stationed here to carry out an anti-mosquito campaign—draining of pools, elimination of breeding-places. He was observed the other day to be reversing the procedure: making pools and filling tree-holes with water. Questioned, he logically replied: "My bwana told me to collect mosquito larvæ. How can I do so if there are no mosquitoes?"

One leaves the Gedi settlement amazed at the fertility that can be coaxed from this dry, barren-looking, sandy country. Coaxing is a necessity: in three seasons, without due treatment, all the fertility is gone.

In the time of the Arab slave-owners, this narrow coastal strip was thickly cultivated and yielded generous harvests. Since then, under freedom, it has fallen into decay. An oasis such as the Gedi settlement shows that fertility lies latent; all that is lacking is the means to exploit

## PALM-TODDY

it. That which is common to slavery and to Gedi is control; as my guide said, the key is supervision.

You cannot control and supervise the whole population of the coast, nor set up everyone with small-holdings, cemented-in wells, tree nurseries, free schools and all the rest. Such schemes must point a way for others to follow on their own initiative. That has not yet happened. Gedi shows what can be done; it remains for the people of the coast to do it.

## MALINDI

Once an important city nearly always at war with Mombasa, old Malindi has dwindled to a few dilapidated Arab houses, a double row of Indian shops, an ugly modern mosque. In the shade of a spreading flame-tree lurks a grubby little eating-house that sells (15 for a shilling) the most excellent 'sambusas': portions of curry folded into triangular *chupattis* and fried in deep sim-sim oil. Across the way stands the District Officer's house, flanked by two toy cannons. The D.O. is a brawny young man just out of the R.A.F., a new broom sent to sweep some of the cobwebs from this sleepy corner of the Kenya Protectorate. His first task is to clean up the black market: a task not made easier by chopping-and-changing of staff which has given Malindi four different D.O.s in two years.

"Instead of planting food crops to feed themselves, the Giriama have been growing sim-sim which they sell on the black market to the Indians. Then they come down on the Government for famine relief. They've been getting up-country maize for several years, although they could perfectly well grow it themselves.

"This has got to stop. And they must pay up their taxes too, often three or four years in arrears. I'm telling them this at a series of barazas. In the war we were short of staff but now we must get back to proper standards of administration."

With a world food crisis, and the ever-growing strain on African land, it seems indeed remarkable that these coastal peoples, living in an area once famous for its productivity, should depend on the efforts of others for their very food.

"Palm-toddy is the curse of the country," said this brisk young D.O., whose two pram-borne babies may be seen parading daily under the flame-trees. "Half the men are drunk all the time."

There are no closing hours for coconut trees and no taxes. You just walk up to a trunk and slash it, and hold a calabash while the sap drips out. In two days the juice, without further treatment, is ready



## KENYA

to drink, and very potent. If whisky-trees and beer-trees grew wild in England I dare say few of us would be sober. It is the hardy Giriama women, of course, who do what work must be done in the fields, and carry the cotton and sim-sim to the Indian buyers.

Over a cup of tea the Indian doctor who runs the over-crowded little hospital told lurid stories about an operation he had performed the day before on a woman who had walked in with a baby dead for three days in the womb.

"In this heat, you can imagine the condition—it was putrefying, the woman was hugely distended. I removed the baby and parts of the mother as well"—his details became even more harrowing—"she was on the table for three hours. I did not consider there was any hope of her recovery. In two days she was up and playing with the children in the ward; in three days she had left the hospital to walk home twenty miles. Remarkable? Yes, but many of the women are just as tough."

These are the ex-slaves. The fabric of their ex-masters is less durable.

The red flag of Oman and Zanzibar flies above the little courthouse where the Liwali, head of the Arabs, presides; for this coastal strip is nominally part of the Sultan's domains and is leased by the Kenya Government for £17,000 a year. (The Sultan is trying to raise the rent.) It forms no part of the Colony of Kenya.

In wealth, in prestige, in vitality, the Arabs have shrivelled. The abolition of slavery wrecked their economy, their land has passed mainly to Indians and their political power wholly to Europeans. They retain their dignity, their customs, their faith and their mastery of the sea. The dhows that handle the coastwise trade and ply to India and to the Red Sea and to the Persian Gulf are mainly Arab-manned.

The pickings are slender, but now and again a plum may drop unexpectedly. Such was the good fortune of Ali, chauffeur to a European until he saved and borrowed enough to buy a dhow and retire to Lamu. Several years later he walked into his former master's hotel and extracted a cheque from his long robes.

"Can you cash this for me?" asked Ali.

"Certainly," said his ex-employer, making for the till; and then stopped. The cheque was for £1,000.

"The Government gave it to me," said Ali, "for taking stores to Mogadishu in my dhow." This was in the war, Mogadishu the next port of call up the coast, a couple of days' run. He made one more such voyage and lives now in affluence, the owner of a fleet of dhows.

Yesterday was the festival of the Maulidi, the Prophet's birthday.



Silt on the Sabaki : results of soil erosion

Grand Canyons in embryo : gulleying in Kamasia





Giriama women bring cotton for sale

Interior of a ginnery, Malindi



## MAMBRUI

A procession of men and boys in clean white robes and little open-work white caps moved slowly down the single street towards the mosque, swaying as they went and chanting doleful-sounding verses from the Koran. Some of the men had the real Arab look about them: tall, black-bearded, with sharp features and fine dark eyes. Others showed in their swarthiness and heavier features a mixture of African blood. There were boys among them of extraordinary beauty and fineness, with lithe figures and keenly-chiselled heads, yet indefinably effeminate, and with that angelic purity of expression that seems often to accompany depravity.

After the service everyone gathered, to the light of bonfires and lanterns, round a triumphal arch of plaited palm-leaves and an open-air pulpit. The arch was dotted with white, fluffy cotton bolls.

"Like your snow at Christmas!" said one of the Arabs. Somehow Nordic tradition, Christianity and honour to the Prophet seem to have become intermixed.

Two holy men in green turbans read from the Koran in Arabic and delivered improving homilies in Swahili. From the shelter of the houses, silent groups of black-robed females looked on, muffled up in what looked like bee-keeping equipment, with slits in front like holes in the nozzle of a gas-mask, but to peer and not to breathe through. What an attire in this baking heat! One would expect the women to suffocate or to revolt. Yet one does not hear of harem rebellions. A degree of pliancy astonishing to Western minds seems to permeate this oriental climate.

Yesterday was Malindi's turn to celebrate the Maulidi; to-morrow, Mambrui's. For some reason this fishing village, about ten miles up the coast, has a reputation for especial holiness.

The twentieth century has passed Mambrui by. So, indeed, have all centuries; it is a place severed from time and circumstance, as if embedded in a never-ending dream. On a flat, hot, empty shore, men sit all day in the shade of the meat-market, a roofed-over concrete slab. Meat or no meat, stench or no stench, it matters little; even the vultures are too lethargic to stir from the midden. Near the sea rises a tall crumbling house, once the seat of a noble family and wearing still its splendid, heavy, carved door; in the ruined central courtyard their poor successors, with festering eyes and tabid limbs, squat in the dirt among a host of pigeons.

Nearby the mosque, low and flat and with a certain grace, stands by the sea. The light of the day, at first so white and brilliant, filters

## KENYA

through whitewashed arches to an open centre strewn with mats. Under a small balcony where the preacher stands an ostrich egg hangs suspended over the Koran.

With these two exceptions, all the houses are shacks of mud-and-wattle; in their small verandas men sit all day, some at sewing machines, some playing the interminable game of *bao*, a board between them dented with twin rows of little hollows into which they drop the beans.

We watched several of Mambui's citizens paint with glaring colours a high pulpit from which a holy man is to deliver the Maulidi address. In a derelict shed near the pink-and-chrome-yellow erection lurks a lost-looking piece of Western machinery.

"It belongs to an Indian," said our self-appointed guide—a young man who, like all his race, redeems the squalor of poverty with the manners of a gentleman; and added cryptically: "It has something to do with soap."

He showed us a fenced garden full of green plants, hand-irrigated, thriving in the sand.

"Betel-nuts that Indians buy." Mambui's only industry, their leaves the only touch of green. All else is bleached and dun-coloured: the shore, the listless sea, the neutral thatch, with here and there the black figure of a veiled woman or a vulture's black feathers moving slowly across the scene. Thus have the power and splendour of an Arab empire spilled out over the sand.

## LAMU

We ferried the Tana—no wider than the Thames near Wallingford—at Garsen, after 75 miles of empty country, and bumped across a dry swamp through 'the gate of lions' into a sort of forest, but without tall trees; dark and dense, the sombre green gloom was here and there lightened by clusters of flamingo-tinted *adenia* flowers.

Emerging from this, we entered a dom-palm wood. Their criss-crossed stems, each in a spiky sheath, arose, tortured and decorative, on all sides, their drooping fronds the material for an industry, the plaiting of baskets and mats. Among them lolloped a herd of topi, ugly, tapering antelopes with a pink naked look about them, and an iridescent blue sheen over their haunches. A flock of dusky birds arose, iridescent also, as if a thin film of oil had been poured over their shoulders: the glossy ibis, foraging among the charred roots of scrub recently fired. Baboons and monkeys in abundance sprang about, feasting no doubt on the fruit of the dense-foliaged mango trees that

## DOM-PALMS AND TOPI

stood like sentinels to mark the site of long-deserted settlements. A lonely and depopulated land.

Beyond Wito the car lurched, mainly in second gear, from hole to hillock for the best part of 50 miles, passing at one point white-encrusted salt-pans, shimmering in a blinding heat, renowned as the haunt of a peculiar kind of demon: an old grey-beard of pleasant manners who invites the traveller to drink from a calabash of cool water. As the traveller gratefully obeys, the old man raises his hand—and the nail of his little finger, long and sharp as a dagger, slits the victim's throat.

Our road, if such it could be called, ended in a little ramp above a creek separating Lamu island from the mainland. This is mangrove country. All around stretch the low-lying deep-green forests, the tangle of roots reaching deep into the mud, and the mud itself alive with little crabs, each holding aloft as it scuttles one enormously enlarged claw—a claw as big as the rest of the crustacean. Tiny oysters cling like necklaces to the mangrove branches, their edges razor-sharp; the wind carries a smell faintly sulphurous.

In an hour or so the boat arrived, crowded with passengers for the Mombasa bus: women, mostly, muffled up in their decent blacks, shepherding small children. Richer Arabs often send their wives to Mombasa to have their babies—a perilous undertaking, one would imagine, over such a road.

The bus, invariably packed, starts in the hot afternoon and runs through the night, bumping and lurching. Sometimes the driver halts to shoot a topi. There is a rush of passengers towards it; hitching their *kekoys* round their waists, the men leap through the bush in order to cut its throat before it dies, and drag it back with shouts of exultation. The beast is hitched on behind and bits cut off, as the bus proceeds, for roadside friends, and the residue shared out at the end of the journey.

Lamu is a long, thin island, mostly mangrove swamp. The town is self-effacing. You come upon it suddenly, a clot of houses behind a short and tidy waterfront, the red flag of the Sultan flying from a monumental Portuguese fort, and the beach crowded with sea-going dhows.

We sailed past the town to Shela, a fishing village about two miles beyond. Our boat ran up under the terrace; we leapt into the warm sea and paddled ashore. A white goat suckled its kid by the steps; in the bedroom, three Siamese kittens nozzled their mother's teats in the sun. Amid these scenes of languid fertility, the boatman's request for three times his legitimate fare intruded. There was no ungentlemanly

## KENYA

wrangling, however. The bearded Arab received in indifferent silence the reply that our host would settle later, and a servant, bowing slightly, asked: "Then the boatman has your permission to withdraw?"

The house is cleverly built between the creek, which laps at its terrace, and the ruins of an old Arab mansion. Just behind it stands the Friday mosque. From the tall, mottled-grey minaret, a shaft of phallic simplicity, the muezzin can gaze across to the low green islands of Manda and Paté, back at the rolling sand-dunes which cover the island's northern tip, and down over the crumbling roofs of Shela. For the village is in decay. The fine old two-storeyed houses with their decorated halls and high-roofed rooms are all deserted. People live in huts under their walls or inhabit the bat-ridden ruins, hanging worn blankets over doorless apertures. The young men have gone away to Malindi, Dar es Salaam, Mombasa.

"There is no work here, no profit," they say. Very old ladies, attended perhaps by very old ex-slaves, linger on amid past glories, living on the charity of the mosque.

Yet the people of Shela own land on Manda island—fertile land for the most part uncultivated, neglected. A few go over in canoes early in the morning to do a little desultory hoeing and fruit-collecting. Arabs and Bajuns—a mixed people of the islands—do not take to the work of cultivators. That sort of thing was left to slaves; seafaring, trade, talk and worship comprise their *métier*. So Shela decays.

Among the sand-dunes behind the village we came upon bleached tibias and fibias and fragments of skull. These are said to be remnants of an army of the men of Paté who, seeking to outflank their age-long rivals of Lamu, were set upon and annihilated. Under these haunted sands the old city of Lamu is said to lie—buried in a night by the hand of God, according to legend, for its Sodom-like wickedness. But the lesson, like other human lessons, has not been learnt. Of the newer town Stigand, writing some 40 years ago, declared roundly: "the people are practically all voluptuaries, opium and bhang smoking and drinking is common, while civilised vices are rife."<sup>1</sup> And the sands are creeping slowly up again.

The Arab town is compact and solid, made of flat-roofed double-storeyed houses towering on either side of dark lanes so narrow that only two can walk abreast. These buildings, plastered over with a cement of coral and sand, have weathered to an uneven off-white, almost a pale honey-colour, most pleasing to the eye. In one such

<sup>1</sup>*The Land of Zinj*. C. H. Stigand. Constable & Co., 1910.

## TEA WITH THE LIWALI

street we encountered an old wrinkled woman apparently wearing wings. Yards of printed cotton was festooned in a sort of frame folded on her back.

This is the *shira'a*, once worn by ladies of quality: a sort of canopy supported on four sticks under whose shade she walked, one slave carrying the two forward sticks and one bearing the two aft. Perhaps this old ex-slave now wore her ex-mistress's canopy to remind her of more spendid days; but when we stopped to speak to her she vanished like a ghost into a maze of tunnels.

These miniature streets, lined for the most part with dark cavernous shops kept by Indians, astonished us by their cleanliness.

"That, I'm afraid, is not a natural condition," said our guide. "It is due to Daddy Cornell." He is the District Commissioner, a lover of the coast who knows when to harry the people and when to leave them alone. He makes them keep the town clean; they grumble and obey; but he does not try to reform the unchangeable. Nor could he, nor any man; Lamu is old—it was founded, according to tradition, by Abdul Malik of the Hejaz in A.D. 699, together with Paté, Malindi, Zanzibar, Mombasa, Kilwa and other cities—and it is tradition-bound and decadent. The total European population of the island numbers six. All are bachelors.

The central square is dominated by a Portuguese fort, now a jail, with walls as thick as houses and buttresses like giants' thighs. In front stands a lovely African almond tree, its clusters of leaves turning rust-red. In its shade an alfresco café dispenses mugs of tea and sticky little cakes flavoured with sim-sim seed. A vendor offers pots and kettles; villainous-looking men shovel halved coconuts into sacks and trundle them off on barrows; the dusty square, the pinched streets are crowded and chattering.

"Lamuans are law-abiding and well-behaved," said the Liwali, who entertained us in his thick-walled house to tea off imported ginger biscuits: a small, youngish, bird-like, intelligent man with fluent English. At the Maulidi, he said, all the men of the town gathered at the holiest of the 28 mosques and not a single burglary was committed. With a quick, charming smile the Liwali added:

"We had all the burglars put away."

Lamu lives precariously from hand to mouth on trade, for its daily bread still at the mercy of the weather. From May to August, in the south-east monsoon, dhow traffic comes to a standstill and the single road is closed. Before the war a motor-vessel used to come regularly from Mombasa, but she was sunk on active service and there is none



## KENYA

to take her place; so now at this season Lamu, storm-swept and rain-bound, is cut off altogether. This is a time of hardship and hunger.

The cutting of mangrove poles from the swamps is the main industry. These are shipped in dhows to Arabia and down the coast. Beside them, on the waterfront, are stacks of matting plaited from palm-leaf fibre by the women for some minute profit. Women embroider also the little white caps: fine work, full of tiny perforations, delicately executed on unworthy material. Carved bedsteads are carried sometimes to Mombasa. Lamu can offer little else.

"Our young men are leaving," said the Liwali, echoing the words of the Shela people. "There is nothing for them here."

Our Shela host, who shares the lives and now the faith of these Arabs and yet retains, in spite of good intentions, that Western itch to put his world back in joint, tries to lead Lamuans towards self-help. He has started a school for spinning and weaving from local cotton, arguing that people would do better to make their own *kekoy*s than to pay heavily for poor imported ones. He has provided wheels, looms, dyes and a Kikuyu instructor who turns out lengths good enough to be snapped up in Nairobi.

"Oh, yes, people come," he said. "They learn quickly. They stay for a little—and then tail off when the novelty fades."

No one has yet stuck to the craft until he has mastered it. No one has made his own *kekoy*.

Henry Bournier is not cast down. At Wito, on the mainland, he has started a model farm to show what can be done with simple methods of good husbandry. He is introducing native sheep and a small herd of cattle and planting fruit-trees and coconuts, all out of his own pocket. He tilts at centuries of apathy and enervation with a touching enthusiasm, and with few illusions about his friends save that which is perhaps the greatest of all, that a passing stimulus can change the lives of people moulded to fit their setting by the slow force of centuries.

The six Europeans of Lamu are individualists. There is Henry Bournier, the gentle Moslem (his brother, oddly enough, is a Hindu); Daddy Cornell and his assistant, who see to the order and good government of a large slice of coastland as well as of the island; a retired planter who keeps, in an old Arab house on the waterfront, a rough kind of hotel; and then there is Coconut Charlie.

One pictures a sozzled sort of beachcomber in a down-at-heel bar; but our call was a formal affair. At the stair-head of an old house a

## COCONUT CHARLIE

portly white-haired and white-moustached gentleman, most correctly attired, stood to receive us and to display his collection of antiques, the nucleus of a museum whose foundation is his dearest hope.

Lamu pottery, copper-ware and silver has a reputation often exploited by the tourist-fleecer but deriving from a golden age based on the skill of craftsmen, the learning of law-givers and a certain grace of life. Little survives. By assiduous collection, Coconut Charlie has gathered a fair quantity of earthenware jars, porcelain bowls, copper coffee-jugs, silver-inlaid locks, brass-studded chests, ivory-inlaid ebony chairs, and a couple of peculiar carved pieces about two feet long said to be used for making vermicelli.

"People who put so much skill into making an ordinary kitchen utensil," Coconut Charlie pointed out, "must have had a high standard of living and a love of art."

Although 'Lamu pottery' is sold up and down the coast it is unlikely that any of it was made here. There is no china-clay. As a rule the rich Arab drank from imported Chinese porcelain, and the walls of his dining-hall were studded with rows of niches, almost like the outside of a dovecote, where the best china stood.

Coconut Charlie came to Lamu 35 years ago and for the last 18 years he has not once left the island. Why, indeed, should he? It is a world to itself: considering the state of its bigger brother, not a bad world at all. And he has a hobby for his leisure hours. He studies trains. The history of the British railways and the performance of their crack locomotives are at his finger-tips, and he can work out for you, here on the cool veranda of his old house, the talk of traders and dhow-captains in his ears, your best route from Southampton to Bangor and your times of departure and arrival at the different junctions on the way.

Dhows are made on this waterfront, apparently out of bent and worm-eaten old beams and rusty nails, assembled under small thatched sheds. Back a little stand mansions built by Arab notables and now nearly all the property of Indians. An exception is the District Commissioner's house, and in it hangs the horn of Siwa, an ivory tusk so skilfully carved that it almost bears comparison with Chinese work: the property of the Sultans of Paté.

The town of Paté, razed twice by the Portuguese, was finally sacked in the eighteenth century by Galla warriors, and its fallen splendours form the subject of the *Inkisafi*, a highly moral poem which speaks of the lantern-lighted banqueting halls and the damask-curtained beds of teak and ivory, silver-inlaid, so high that you must clamber up on

## KENYA

silver ladders, all crumbled and deserted, and uses the fate of the city as a text to recall the hearer to things spiritual. To-day Paté island is inhabited by the seafaring Bajuns, who sometimes fetch the great carved horn from Lamu for ceremonies which fuse the spirited pagan dance with staid Moslem ritual.

In the night, twenty shillings were stolen from the cook. There is a prayer which, recited in the mosque, brings down on the thief instant death and eternal torments. In no time at all this prayer had been said. Soon afterwards a terrified person—a guest of one of the servants—came to restore the money and beg that the prayer be rescinded.

On our way to the town we called in at the Government school. It stands in a field of coconuts, a pleasing, simple building, its windows gay with fresh green paint. In front a camel was plodding slowly in a circle grinding sim-sim.

It is strange anywhere in Africa to hear of people who refuse to send their sons to school. Yet in Lamu the school had actually to close from lack of support. Blame was laid on the unsoundness of the teacher's theology. At the back of this lay a fear that schooling would weaken the hold of Islam, a fear perhaps worked upon by those scholars attached to every mosque who instruct boys in the Koran and whom a real school might put out of business.

The new teacher, a remarkably good-looking young man, has made a flying start. A Zanzibari, his orthodoxy is unquestioned; he drills his pupils daily in the Koran. He has collected hitherto about 40 boys. (No girls, of course.) The brightest may go on to Mombasa and from there, if they qualify, to the college that serves all East Africa at Makerere,<sup>1</sup> in Uganda.

That night we sat on the terrace at Shela and watched a full moon, rising over Manda, silver the channel and drench the silent village in its ghostly light. The wind fell, wavelets nozzled softly against the white sands. The shadowed ruined houses, the arched mosque with its high minaret outlined against a sky so moon-swept as to be only here and there pricked with the sturdier stars, the drooping coconuts, all seemed magically unreal: out of the shadows, several small bare-footed children emerged and stole towards us with the diffidence of night-prowling voles; reassured, they hovered near, and a boy in a white *kanzu* spoke to our host in half-whispered tones.

"You are going away?"

"Yes, in a few days."

<sup>1</sup>Pronounced Mā-kē-rē-rē.

## THE MUMIAMI

"You will go far?"

"To Nairobi."

"Oh! You may go to Nairobi; I could not."

"You are afraid?"

"Yes, of the *mumiami*!"

This apparition is feared not only in Lamu but all down the coast and indeed up-country. It is a sort of bloodsucker that can take on many guises; in this case, it patrols the streets at dead of night in a truck belonging to the Medical department, and, should it come upon a straggler, draws from his veins all his blood with a rubber pump, leaving his body in the gutter limp and drained.<sup>1</sup>

Our host talked of the Lamu people with affection and a vain attempt at objectivity. He knows their faults to lie not in their stars; the way to prosperity of a sort lies open if they will but get down to honest work; their arts, once considerable, have perished; they are lazy, vicious and weak.

He tries to be objective, but their soft charm, their graceful manners, their brotherliness get the better of reason. Here men still kiss the hand of a superior without servility, the young step aside for the old, in the mosque the beggar is the equal of the lord; so off he will sail in a dhow to the islands with his friends, sharing their prayers and their hot greasy curries and sweet thick tea, their hard sleeping-quarters, their talk of reefs and storms and trade. Their living art is music, he says; each crew carries drums and a few crude guitars and horns; when dhow passes dhow under full sail both crews strike up and try to outdo the other. The young men sing love-songs under the stars and chant long Swahili poems. Lamu is full of music, he says.

The grip of Islam here is strong and archaic. Like the medieval church, its virtues are discipline and unity. All very well for men, but what of the women? They are chattels still. Men deny them education, exclude them from entertainments, bar them from careers, indeed from any life outside the walls of their houses.

"They get something in return," our host insisted. "Absolute security, for one thing. No woman ever finds herself destitute or alone. None are left unmarried."

"Is that worth the sacrifice of freedom?"

<sup>1</sup>An example of the force of this *mumiami* superstition occurred recently in Mombasa. A rumour spread that the Fire Brigade were concerned in *mumiami* practices and had captured a woman in order to draw her blood. An angry mob besieged the Fire Station, refused to listen either to African or European officials who tried to reason with them and stoned the Municipal Native Affairs Officer. Finally the mob had to be dispersed with batons by the police.

## KENYA

"Women may not have freedom, but they enjoy real respect."

"Only as mothers—not as individuals."

"Yet they are happy!"

"How can you tell?"

"Talk to them—they will answer you freely, they're not in the least down-trodden. European women are emancipated; I believe they are less contented than these. Talk to them, and see which you think get the most happiness out of life."

On the bookshelves is a translation of a Swahili poem 'The Wifely Duty', written rather over a century ago by the high-born wife of a sheikh. In it she instructs her daughter first to follow the faith, next to respect her parents and finally to consider at all times the comforts and needs of her husband.

She must (says the poem) strive always to please him; sit by him when he sleeps ready to answer his call, hasten to prepare his meal when he wakes; massage his head and not scorn to sweep out the bathroom; sing his praises, yet promise on his behalf nothing he cannot perform; ask his permission to go out and hurry home again; prepare feasts for his friends, yet watch the accounts; never forget to put henna on her finger-nails, wanda on her eyes, rose-water on her body and to perfume her bed with jasmine. She must never answer back. 'If he brings you ill, God will protect you.'

If she follows faithfully all these instructions she will reach paradise—for her entry or rejection will be determined by her husband's word. (There is no foundation for this quite general belief, I am told, in the Koran.) A perfect world, this that the poem describes, for men; indeed 'The Wifely Duty' is surely the expression of a husband's dream.

Western women believe themselves to be the better for their freedom to use and exercise the mind—and the body also, for that matter; I suppose no Moslem woman has ever swum for pleasure in this mild, inviting sea. (As dhow passengers they are penned the whole hot voyage long in a tiny, dark, airless cabin, as a rule vilely sick, and never permitted to set eyes on the sea.) Yet here are no lonely spinsters, no nervous wrecks, no unfulfilled lives. These Orientals made their choice—or it was made for them—between freedom and security, and perhaps have sense enough to see that you cannot have both at once. Which choice brings greater happiness? Few of us, I suppose, would change places. Would they? No one knows.

## THE SENTENCE-SERVER

### MALINDI

Back at Malindi, the millions of tons of up-country topsoil disgorged by the Sabaki river—now a wide stretch of chocolate-red silt—have been joined by the Giriama banana plantations. It is hard to clamber along the beach, so high is it stacked with trees and trash, and bathing is out of the question. The fishermen, put out of action, delve among the incoming waves for bunches of bananas. We had corn-on-the-cob and pumpkins for supper, both gleaned from the waves.

This year's rains are exceptional, but the damage to soil fertility never flags. To see the brown Sabaki bearing its load far out to sea is like watching a country bleed to death. Now and again the wound breaks out with special violence and gouts of blood burst forth; in between times the steady, deathly trickle goes on.

Last night a motorist on his way back from Lamu avoided collision with a bull elephant by a few feet. He stalled the engine and found himself in the midst of a herd ambling across the road. The game ranger, who lives in idyllic isolation at Casuarina Point, believes there to be a thousand elephants on the lower Tana. If the groundnut scheme comes in, he will have to shoot and drive away the lot.

Poaching of both elephant and rhino is rife. (Rhino horns find a ready market in India for their reputed aphrodisiac properties.) After much careful detective work the police recently caught an Indian red-handed with £1,000 worth of rhino horn stacked high in his shop. In his defence, the accused man claimed that someone else had used his duka as a dump; and, sure enough, a second Indian came forward to claim the horns. He had put them there, he swore, quite without the defendant's knowledge.

This was too much for the magistrate.

"The horns took up about two-thirds of the back of your shop?"

"Yes," said the owner of the duka.

"And you used the shop every day?"

"Yes."

"And you still say you didn't notice the horns?"

"Yes."

The native policeman who had found the contraband agreed with the accused that nothing was easier than to have a shop full of rhino horns for three weeks without noticing anything odd. The magistrate acquitted the duka-owner, but sentenced the second Indian, who had claimed the horns, to six months.

Checking up, the game ranger found that the sentenced man had fourteen previous convictions for like offences. His profession was in

## KENYA

fact that of a sentence-server; his tariff £50 for each month's imprisonment—and no income tax.

Indians, as usual, run such business as there is apart from hotels. An Indian chills the dashing salmon-red and electric-blue fish brought in from native canoes and transports it to his own shops in Mombasa and Nairobi. The owner of the ginnery is a portly and alert Hindu who takes no trouble to conceal his poor opinion of the peasants from whom he buys cotton at Government-controlled prices.

"They come down from their reserve, hire plots on the coast and cultivate for a year or two to get the money they need for a new wife. Then they go. They do nothing to preserve the land, they have no wish to improve their methods or increase their yields. Round Mambrui so much soil has been washed away that the Government had had to close the area."

In the half-light of his factory, men sit cross-legged on piles of lint and feed it into rollers. The pay is low but the work light, and the ginnery is never short of labour. Outside, under shelter, shiny Giriama women squat and gossip in their little ballet skirts beside their baskets of white cotton. This has been a record crop at a good price.

"It is precarious," said the Indian. "Next year, there may be no crop. Yet no one saves money." I am sure the ginnery-owner does.

Next door is a garage owned by a young Englishman.

"Indians want to buy me out," he said. "They've got all the money down here. They offered me a big price. But I won't sell—not to Indians, I won't."

Two buses ply between Malindi and Mombasa, 77 miles apart. One belongs to a sheikh. At eight o'clock it fills up with Indians, Arabs, Africans, packed like potatoes in a sack. The women are submerged under their black wrappings and clasp fat squalling infants. The men puff cigarettes and talk interminably. The bus starts off with a jerk, flies through the town and halts beside a tea-shop on the outskirts. Everyone jumps out and stands about. Boys approach offering sticky cakes. Old men spit betel-nut into the dust. An hour passes, at last the driver returns. Leaping on board, he revs up the engine and drives down the red bumpy road as if all the devils in creation were at his back. The bus sways like a rolling boat, passengers cling to each other, babies squawl, dust flies, luggage roped to the roof leaps about. On goes the bus until it draws breath at the first ferry, boiling furiously. It arrives on time, more or less, after leaving about an hour late.

## AFRICANS AND ASIANS

### MOMBASA

We had to shout above a blaring loudspeaker. Under pink and yellow walls hung with sprightly oleographs, and over a five-course luncheon, three African civil servants told me about their troubles. (In the lounge of this Indian-owned Britannia Hotel crouches a stuffed lion: for a fee, guests may be photographed with one foot on its neck, clasping a property rifle.) No European-owned hotel would have admitted my companions.

"Many of us do the same work as Indians and Arabs," said the Post Office clerk, "yet we receive less pay. That is unfair. Why should we get less because we are Africans?"

"A man will call himself an Arab, yet his mother was an African, and for many generations that has been so," said Mr. Harrison, the assistant Municipal Native Affairs Officer. "Why should he go to a special school and receive more pay?"

It is against 'Asians'—Arabs, Indians and Goans—rather than against Europeans that the resentment of these educated Africans seems at present to be mainly directed. This feeling has been exacerbated by rationing. Since it is their staple food, only Asians are allowed to buy rice, yet many Mombasa-born Africans are no less attached to it.

"Mombasa people are of three kinds," Mr. Harrison explained. "There are the young men from up-country who come to make a certain sum to buy a wife. Whatever they get, they will save something and stay until they have what they want. Then they go home.

"There are the natives of Mombasa in regular employment, such as myself. What makes things hard for us is our tradition of hospitality. If people come to see us, distant relatives perhaps, they must stay a month—two months—a year; and we must feed them. Some people support not only their families but many relatives as well; and the more money a man earns, the more will come to share his good fortune.

"And then there are those, the great majority, who come because they have heard there is wealth in Mombasa. They spend their month's wages in a few days and then have nothing, and must borrow until their next pay comes. They run into debt, and some grow desperate and take to crime. These are many."

Another sore point is the lack of schooling.

"There is only room for about one-fifth of the children of school age in our Mombasa schools," said Mr. Harrison. "All these belong to Missions. Yet the Government has a school for Arabs. Why not for Africans?"

The oldest Christian school in East Africa began in a tiny way at



## KENYA

Rabai nearby, on the mainland, under the famous C.M.S. missionaries Krapf and Rebmann. (Mr. Harrison, who speaks fluent English, is a product of its successor, the Buxton High School, and demonstrates what can be done with good material.) That was just a century ago; and there is still no full secondary school for Africans in the whole of the Coast Province. But one has almost hatched from paper into fact.

In sensible and pleasant buildings—thatched, white, open-sided classrooms of coral rag, rather like summer-houses—a galaxy of teaching talent instructs the Arab youth. The new headmaster, an energetic, forthright young Englishman out of the Forces, has the help of two Europeans, three Makerere men—pearls of great price, two of them Africans, incidentally—and nine others: in all, 15. By local standards this is a lavish allowance for 350 boys of whom the great majority are tots in the lower forms. In the top classes are the filtered few who aspire towards Makerere. Only two, so far, have passed into this college. Arabs as a rule prefer trade.

"So far as I can see," said one of the masters, "the only thing that's wrong with Arab education is the Arabs." He had been disappointed in local talent. The small boys are often bright enough, but as they grow older and, if intelligent, attract the attention of the senior and more worldly-wise, their energies are diverted into other and less profitable channels.

"They write notes to each other in class. Some of them are dreadful—really quite disgusting!"

Those who know Arabia say they can discern, in this progeny of mixed blood and easy living, only a shadow of the virile and hard-bitten folk of the peninsular. Some are so negroid in looks that you wonder how they can have ratified their claim, others have effeminate and lovely features that might have graced the cup-bearers at some medieval Turkish court; one I saw—a smiling, soft-eyed, peach-like little creature—told us that he came from the Hadhramaut.

The new headmaster has introduced compulsory football and wages a constant war on lateness, dirty shirts and indolent manners. One feels a fresh breeze off the moors blowing through this musty corner of the old town. 'He huffed and he puffed'—will he be able to blow down so ramshackle an edifice, that yields rather than resists but does not quite topple over?

Sometimes, said this headmaster, he is brought up short by a glimpse down a mental chasm dividing him from his charges. Speaking of current events, he first made some joke which would have won a

### THREE STAGES IN HOUSING

burst of laughter in any English school; the Arabs received it in blank uncomprehending silence. Next, wishing to bring home the horrors of war, he related an experience of his own to illustrate the gruesome effect of high explosives on the human body. A spontaneous burst of delighted boyish laughter greeted his visceral description.

"Frankly, we're at sea," he said.

Should not Arab education—one naturally asks—be directed by Arabs, not Europeans? That, certainly, is the view of Mbarak Ali Bin Hinawy, the Liwali, an illustrious member of one of the old coast families and a famous Swahili scholar, his alert, lively, intelligent mind charged with an unexpected current of energy.

"Nothing is done," he said, "to instil into our children a pride in their past and an understanding of their own tradition. We are cut off from the stream of Arab culture." His own two eldest sons are at school in Alexandria.

He blames the Government. Yet can any Government re-vivify a culture not its own? The local Arabs, numbering only about 30,000, lack (as the Liwali sadly admits) the driving force of nationalist fervour.

One can trace three stages in the development of Mombasa's housing. The first dates from those forgotten days when, if a man wanted a house, he just went and built one, in mutual disregard of authority. Whole villages of these remain. They cling together in higgledy-piggledy fashion, between them narrow lanes twist and double, their roofs—thatch over old debbis<sup>1</sup>—almost touch. As you enter, all is dark, there are rooms to right and left, and in front a piece of sacking to screen off the kitchen with its open fire. Floors are of earth, there are no ceilings, all is rough and crude; yet these houses are not smelly, and the rooms I pried into at random were clean and tidy, the occupants' possessions neatly stacked, their clothes hung up, their beds made; one got no impact of squalor.

By our standards such dwellings are primitive, but to a tribesman coming in from the hills they must represent urban sophistication: they have chimneys, doors, a little furniture, a pit latrine, all lacking in the houses which rural Africans have for centuries built for themselves.

The next stage came when the Government laid out streets on the chequer-board pattern and rented to Africans plots of minimum size. These houses are for the most part larger, with a yard at the back, and

<sup>1</sup>The debbi is a four-gallon petrol tin, used all over East Africa as a measure and as a roofing material.

## KENYA

whole families, perhaps with three or four children, often crowd into a single room rented for 15/- a month.

Mombasa is fortunate in one way: if you want building material you simply hack up some coral rag and plaster it over with burnt coral and lime. The meanest house is white and fresh-looking. This whiteness, and the soil baked dry by never-flagging sunshine, and the deep green of vegetation never bare, quite exorcise the drabness of poverty that in Europe hangs like a foggy miasma over slums. Young women in cloths as gay as flower-borders sit by their doorways plaiting straw for hats or baskets and rise with an air and a smile to invite you in; the men greet you courteously and seem glad to show you their quarters and discuss their finances; small boys do not jeer, bolt or whistle, people go quietly about their business in an easy, good-natured, lazy manner. No one who has seen the slums of industrial cities in the United States or Western Europe could be altogether cast down by Mombasa's.

Of course there is poverty. Squatting in the shade of their narrow verandas, women offer bundles of three long sticks for six cents. Smouldering at just the right pace, these sticks will cook a meal and a half, sometimes two meals. Water—a clean supply piped forty miles from the hills—sells at one cent a debbi at the stand-pipes, or may be brought to the door by water-carriers for five cents. So high does prestige stand in the scale of African values that several of the lowest-paid workers, asked by a recent tribunal why they paid five cents rather than fetch water themselves—or, more likely, send their wives—replied that it would be *infra dig* to be seen carrying water. Now a racket has grown up amongst the carriers, who try to keep outsiders at the end of the queue.

Wages, low as they stand, are still about four times higher (for unskilled men) than in country districts, and still attract thousands to the town. And living is cheap. At the market you may buy meat unlimited for 6d. a pound, fresh fish for less than 4d., fruit and vegetables for a few cents—oranges and grapefruit at twenty for a shilling, pawpaws for 3d., mangoes, bananas, jack-fruit and karambolas, galore. In the vegetable line, local egg-plants and sweet potatoes jostle fresh green peas and firm cauliflowers from up-country. Some of these are grown by a tribe called the Teita, who operate one of the few successful co-operatives in East Africa. Founded and launched by a keen young District Officer, it sent last year some three million pounds (in weight) of vegetables down the line from Voi to Mombasa, all grown by Africans, bought by the co-op for a flat rate of ten cents

Arab boy



Old Portuguese fort. Lamu

A woman of Mambrui



Door of Native Hospital, Malindi



## GOVERNMENT HOUSING SCHEME

a pound and taken by lorry to the station, in some cases 50 miles away. This enterprise has weathered three years of drought and locusts where many other African companies and would-be co-ops went under, but it has now run into heavy competition from Kikuyu growers up-country.

A witchdoctor's stall is by English standards an unusual market amenity. Here you can buy powders to be rubbed on the forehead for stomach-ache, or on nose and toes to start a flow of mother's milk; spells for potency, amulets to ward off evil spirits and—this is among the most popular—a guaranteed love-potion for sixpence.

With so many flocking to Mombasa—over half its Africans are reckoned to come from up-country—housing has quite failed to keep pace. So rents have risen and people have been crammed into mean and perhaps unhealthy crannies. Now Government and Municipality have decided to tackle the matter directly by building modern flats and cottages for their own staff. So roofs of thatch or flattened debbis give way to locally-made tiles—neat, weatherproof, permanent and costly; cement floors, glazed windows, built-in ovens, sometimes shower-baths appear. The Municipality's estate has room for 800 families, but this does not cover even its own men, let alone any outsiders. Next door is the Government scheme, to house 1,150 civil service families.

Workmen were busy on a stone nursery school big enough for several hundred pupils. Meanwhile, in temporary quarters, rows of little blacks were stretched on mats, deep in their afternoon siesta. Each tot gets a daily half pint of free milk, and all look fat and glossy. The mothers, like mothers everywhere, are delighted to offload them all day—for a fee of 3½d. a month.

These urban mothers do not go out to work. They need never queue, they do not cultivate and their housework and cookery is of the simplest and briefest. They have plenty of time on their hands, and nursery schools might seem to be a luxury. Their object, however, is not to relieve the mother but to train the child. While ordinary schools can and do guide the African brain through examinations, they have failed sadly in the complex task of character-building; and it is at the nursery school age, according to psychologists, that foundations of responsibility, self-reliance and moral behaviour are to be laid.

On the edge of this housing estate stands one of Mombasa's show-pieces, the new social hall, and the finest African building, I should guess, in these four countries. As we picked our way towards it over the usual builder's débris in the glaring afternoon heat—around us a

## KENYA

flat dusty landscape set with coconut palms and dark-leaved mango trees and dotted with white half-finished houses rising from the harsh coral rock—Mr. Leslie, a District Officer lent to the Municipality, observed:

"Somehow it reminds me of the Shakespeare theatre at Stratford-on-Avon."

Climbing a flight of steps, you find yourself in a dance-room or concert hall with a floor of polished mvule, the East African teak, large enough to hold six or seven hundred. The restaurant, dotted with small tables, has a great deal more elbow-room than any Corner House, and from an outdoor café you may survey the world from the shelter of a striped umbrella. There is a reading-room full of comfortable arm-chairs, a recreation room with ping-pong tables and a library which, if it is well stocked, should be one of the finest in colonial Africa.

He was a genius who first thought of the device whereby municipalities take to themselves a monopoly of the sale of native beer and put the profits towards native welfare. The whole of the cost of this palace, some £20,000, has come out of beer-money. The hall is to spurn the hand that created it, however; no intoxicants will be sold, but instead 'nippies' will dispense tea and coffee. The whole notion of young women holding independent jobs and mixing on equal terms with men is revolutionary, and among older Africans causes many shakes of the head.

This genteel and teak-appointed hall and all the clean, neat little white houses to be seen from its windows mark an impressive attempt to raise standards of health and living. And they mark something more: the recognition of a new phenomenon, the urban African; not the country boy who comes to the city to earn money and then returns, but the real oppidan who settles here with his family.

Some deplore this trend, believing that Africans severed from tribal roots will lose their own virtues and gain only the vices of civilisation. They may be right, but their views have become irrelevant, for Africans have themselves decided, in many thousands, to desert the country for the town, no doubt for the same reasons that propelled us in Europe on the same journey. If urban Africans are to come into being—as they are, with or without our approval—it is surely wise to see to it, insofar as we can, that they are spared as much as possible of the drab, slum-ridden misery which fell to the lot of European industrial pilgrims of the nineteenth century.

And there is another side to it. The country can no longer yield a

## UNECONOMIC RENTS

living to the rising numbers of young men. It is there, rather than in the towns, that the poverty forced by overcrowding will soon become most real. It can no longer, therefore, be humane to discourage Africans from emigration to towns, whatever may be the theoretical objections. I heard a critic from a neighbouring country, speaking of Mombasa's and Nairobi's ambitious social halls, say with some asperity:

"In Kenya they believe parquet floors to be a cure for soil erosion!"  
There is something in it, all the same.

Who is going to pay for these houses? So the visitor must wonder as he walks among the sturdy little cottages and hears of plans for two-storeyed flats with flush lavatories and electric cookers. Even these limited schemes are costing over a million pounds.

"The economic rent?" We stood on the veranda of a cottage holding two families, and two bachelors in single rooms. "The economic rent for this block would be about one hundred and thirty shillings a month. The actual rents amount to about half. A big gap? Actually it's even bigger. The cost of supplying water works out at about six shillings a family a month, and we make no charge. So real rents amount to only about one-third of the economic rent, here in Mombasa."

Where, then, does the money come from? At the moment, very largely, from that patient, plodding, acquiescent milch-cow, the British taxpayer. This housing scheme is mainly paid for by the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund, the £120 millions voted by Parliament as a free gift to finance good works in the colonies.

At breakfast, looking through an open window on to a sun-flooded garden and a blue sparkling sea, I had read of the great freeze in Britain, the zero temperatures and driving blizzards. The British, shivering with meagre fuel and docked electricity, struggling into overcrowded transport, returning to arctic houses to exist on their two weekly ounces of butter and bacon, shorn by vicious taxes of what they should be putting by for a little comfort in their old age, and themselves grossly overcrowded in patched-up houses, are paying for these Mombasa Africans to live almost rent free on their sun-warmed island, all but unrationed, never cold and seldom hungry, a six-hour day the most that is ever asked of them.

Fair enough, perhaps—restitution for past neglect, fulfilment of colonial responsibilities?—but it does seem hard that the British should be accused of exploiting Africans.



## KENYA

Nor are they drawing dividends in African goodwill. All human beings, of course, take benefits for granted, but here this is carried to such a pitch that I should doubt whether a single inhabitant of these heavily-subsidised houses realises that his rent is in fact being paid by the people of Britain.

On the contrary, so strongly is it dinned into his head by vernacular newspapers and by his political leaders that it is the bounden duty of his mean and cheating Government to provide continually more welfare services, to educate his children free, to send them to English universities, to pay higher wages for less work, that there is scarcely a young man who does not believe himself aggrieved, exploited and put-upon. The almost total failure of the Government information services, tardily started, inadequately staffed and ill-conceived, to instil a grasp of the harsher economic facts into the minds of the people is a failure for which a cruel price must needs be paid.

As to housing, the limits of British subsidies are in sight. Sooner or later, the gap between rents and costs will have to be filled, in the main by the Municipality—by the ratepayers of Mombasa. Who are these ratepayers? Not Africans, who own little property; nor even Europeans, who number only 1,200, and these mostly civil servants, out of a population of 100,000; but mainly Indians, whose opulent hands grasp most of the island's trade and property.

The Municipal Board has at present a bare majority of Europeans by 11 to 10. As it grows it must reflect realities more closely and the voices of Indians must count for more. Will an Indian-controlled council continue indefinitely to subsidise African housing when this must be done at the expense of the Indian ratepayer? We should be foolish to expect others to defer to egalitarian ideals which form no part of their philosophy. Put more succinctly, as it was by my guide:

"If Indians ever take over Kenya, the Africans will have had it."

A Hindu doctor—small, highly strung, civilised, intelligent—who has abandoned politics in order to start a clinic with the most up-to-date equipment and treatment (he is London and Dublin trained) spoke frankly of his attitude.

"The unskilled African claims that he can't support a family on his wages in Mombasa. He is quite right. And where in the world can an unskilled man do so? Put in another way, what country can afford to pay an unskilled worker enough to support his family in idleness?

"A small group of countries in Western Europe can perhaps do it, and the United States. These are highly industrialised countries with

## AN INDIAN VIEWPOINT

great resources fully developed. Can the mouse do as the lion does? East Africa is not industrialised, it is not rich, it is not fully developed. Look east rather, to countries of the same kind with peasant farming as their basis, with the same problems of mass poverty and ignorance. Nowhere in the East can an unskilled man make enough by himself to support his family. Everywhere his wife works, and his children. It is the *family* that supports itself, not the man. You think this harsh, but it is true."

His wife agreed. She herself, the mother of three sons, has taken a dispenser's training and helps her husband in his clinic.

"Look at India," he went on. "The man, his wife, his whole family toil from five in the morning until nine at night. It is out of the question for him to make enough by his own efforts to keep his family. It is a land of struggle and only by such toil can they keep alive. They can't always even do that. They do not live like this because they enjoy it, but because that is what nature dictates. Nature does not have one law for India and another for Africa.

"Gradually, bit by bit, some of us Indians hope to make life a little better for more people. Why then should the African, who does not work nearly so hard, whose working day is perhaps half the Indian's, why should he expect as his right what no one else in his position can enjoy? It is out of the question for East Africa to pay so much. If we attempt to do so we shall over-reach ourselves and in the end the African will be ruined with the rest of us."

The Indians of Mombasa are breeding so fast that over half their population consists of children, and at the present rate they will outnumber Africans (themselves no niggards at fecundity) in a generation. Will there be scope on so small an island for this monstrous generation, seeing that most are traders, craftsmen and professionals, none producers of food? The question already worries the more far-sighted Indians, who fear unemployment and poverty ahead. This Hindu doctor has the courage to be practical.

"I have started to give birth control advice at my clinic," he said. "I believe that Indians will welcome it."

"And there's no opposition?"

"Some, but nothing to worry about. We are fortunate in one way: we have no religious objection."

Every day the local paper retails a fascinating fresh instalment of evidence given before a Tribunal now in session to investigate grievances lying behind last month's general strike, when even the

## KENYA

houseboys 'came out', and resourceful householders were found making toast with an electric iron. Africans are submitting cost-of-living budgets to show how far their pay falls short of their needs. The trouble is that 'needs' and 'wants' have become hopelessly mixed up in the minds of witnesses. The line is, indeed, always elusive, and I suppose that only a sense of the ridiculous holds any of us back from the feeling that we are born with an inalienable right to a shiny limousine and roast pheasant with burgundy every night for dinner.

Thus one young man who delivers letters from eight till twelve and two till four, and considers his work 'very hard', wants 30/- a month for going to dances; another needs 15/- a week for cosmetics for his wife; yet another, ten frocks a year for his wife and two new woollen suits for himself.

"Why do you need woollen suits in Mombasa?" reasonably asked the Tribunal, sweating in the heat of a tropical February.

"I might want to go to Nairobi!"

There was plenty more in this strain from lower-paid clerks, telegraphists, artisans and stevedores so freed from the shackles of reality that the learned judge was driven to exclaim:

"You fellows are asking for the moon!"

At no point in the evidence did any glimmer of the notion break through that reward must be linked to output. The African's dreams and not his needs or, still less, his economic value, were the only criterion.

Pinioned by print, these dreams look tawdry—a mere caricature of our own sense of values at its least civilised. Cinemas, dances, cigarettes, flashy clothes, cheap perfumes, cutting a dash and outstripping the Jones's, or the Juma's rather—those are its brightest visions. It is from us that he has learnt to see them. The life of the white man in Africa is often a pleasure-seeking one. Useless, then, to blame our pupils, or even ourselves, if the star to which the African has hitched his wagon is made of tinsel; it is an old story, plague spreads but health is not contagious, bad coins drive out good. Such are the facts, and because the African now covets more and more the material goods of his so-much-richer masters, and because he has no idea in his head that the money you earn must depend in the long run not on the organisation of your discontent but on the worth of your labour, and because he feels himself to be shut out from the esoteric circle—for these and for other reasons, the situation is full of danger.

A dhow setting sail on a bright morning to cross the Indian ocean

## FORT JESUS

is a sight to see. Canoes with busy paddlers tow her out of the narrow channel, her sail hanging limp, to the sound of chanting voices and the beat of drums. Towards the roadstead the wind slowly fills the heavy canvas, lateen-rigged; the dhow heels a little as the wind takes the sail and, as she starts forward under her own momentum, all the pennants in the rigging flutter like the wings of birds.

A look-out on the ramparts of Fort Jesus signals the coming and going of vessels as no doubt those earlier watchers did, when Portuguese soldiers manned the battlements. The fort's huge buttressed walls leap up from the very edge of the coral; below them runs a path, then cliffs drop into a clear, still sea. Its walls are mottled in lovely shades of pink and rose, deepening in patches almost to claret. The sweet, thick, sophisticated scent of frangipani mingles oddly, and on the whole triumphantly, with the stench of open drains. At evening, on a flat space below the walls, bearded sailors mend their sails, boys play at football and a Swahili vendor of coffee pours his wares from a swan-necked copper jug of an old Arab pattern.

Fort Jesus is a jail. You pass through a heavy door studded with brass bosses into a keep and emerge, unexpectedly, into the open, to find that the fort is an empty shell, a huge angular husk with no kernel. The centre was razed when Arabs overthrew the Portuguese, and is dotted now with dark-red blocks of prison cells. Most of the prisoners were out at work—crime is booming, said the warder, and the jail is packed—but some of the less energetic sat about in the shade plaiting nets and others were occupied with a little desultory building.

If ever a place should be haunted it is Fort Jesus, completed in 1594 by the Portuguese to protect the island alike from savage inland tribes and from sea raiders. In the Lady Chapel especially one would seek ghosts. To-day it is part of the women prisoners' quarters, its ancient beams disdainfully carved with texts from the Koran.

In 1614 a seven-year-old boy called Yusuf, son of the sheikh of Malindi, was taken to Goa to be educated by Augustinian monks in such a Christian and a Western manner as to fit him for the rôle of Sultan of Mombasa. He returned a Portuguese in faith and habit, and married to a Portuguese wife. Once back among his own people the religion of his forebears and resentment for his father's unavenged murder (the Portuguese Governor of the island had bribed some tribesmen with 2,000 lengths of cloth to kill the sheikh) divided Yusuf's heart and drew him away by stages from his loyalty to the West.

It was in this Lady Chapel, on a day in 1631, that he took his revenge.

## KENYA

While Mass was being said the young Sultan drew his dagger, stabbed the Governor and cut down the priest as he stood at the altar; this was the signal for the massacre of every Portuguese and every Christian on the island. Rallying from Mozambique and Goa, the Portuguese struck back. Yusuf fled to an outlaw's existence and died years later, it is said, by the hand of pirates in Arabian seas. If his ghost walks on these ramparts it must permit itself a derisive smile now and then, for his knife-thrust into the heart of a conqueror who would corrupt by kindness is repeated daily in more slow and subtle ways by the issue of his slaves. Even in the seventeenth century, Western education clearly produced the unexpected, and no doubt the sorcerer's apprentice was as vexed then as he is now at the miscarriage of his spells.

At the end of the century another tragedy was acted out within these walls. A fleet from Oman anchored in the narrows and laid siege to the fort, which sheltered all the Christians on the island, numbering some 2,500 souls. For thirty-three months the siege went on. Bubonic plague carried off all but a remnant of the defenders; reinforcements came from Mozambique; they, too, dwindled from disease and hunger; and when at last the Arabs broke in they found eleven men and two women survivors. These were massacred. Fort Jesus seems an odd name.

Should later conquerors wish to preserve monuments to the British occupation, there is little they could find that speaks of history rather than use save a prosaic statue to Sir William Mackinnon, whitened with bird droppings, standing near the National Bank of India.

This hard-working, hard-headed Scot, more than any other single individual, started the ball of British enterprise rolling in this part of the world. In his disposition the business talent which equipped him to create out of the void a great shipping line (the British India) mingled with that complex vision of opportunity, philanthropy and strategy known in the nineteenth century as imperialism.

All his life he supported with time and money the prolonged and single-handed British effort to abolish slavery in these parts, and recognised (as all did who knew the facts) that this could be achieved only when a slavery-hating power had some base on this coast. Beyond that, and mixed up with it, he saw the opportunity for his country to enrich itself by trade, and the danger to his country should the Germans succeed in their ambition to wrest this whole region from the tenuous hold of the Sultan of Zanzibar.

In 1876 the Sultan, Seyyid Barghash-bin-Said, alarmed by Egyptian

## THE MACKINNON CONCESSION

designs, offered him and his associates—the initiative came entirely from the Arab side—a concession to occupy, administer and trade in the whole of his mainland domains from Mogadishu to Kilwa and inland to the Great Lakes. This would have conferred absolute rights over the region which subsequently became German East Africa (and to-day Tanganyika) as well as over the present Jubaland and Kenya.

Mackinnon responded eagerly; the Sultan was willing; and the breakdown of negotiations has never been explained. Popular talk of the time, and Mackinnon's biographer, put it down to Foreign Office obduracy born of their fear of offending Germany; Coupland, scouting this theory, blames the tactlessness of an Arabist named Badger employed as an interpreter, but quotes a minute from a later Foreign Office file: 'There is a secret history of the failure of the former Mackinnon scheme which I will not commit to paper.'<sup>1</sup> Neither this civil servant nor any other did so commit the tale, and the mystery remains unelucidated.

Sultan Barghash saw his worst fears come true. The Germans, not the Egyptians, ignoring his angry protests, dug themselves in up and down his shadowy empire by making a series of bogus treaties with chiefs on the mainland. His old friend and adviser Sir John Kirk, the British Consul-General, implored the Foreign Office to come to the Sultan's rescue, but in vain. Gladstone's Government had decided to appease Bismarck's. In 1885 a fleet of five German warships anchored off Zanzibar 'to bring the Sultan to a more correct bearing' within twenty-four hours, and Kirk was instructed by his own Government to persuade the Sultan to capitulate.

Seyyid Barghash did so, and with wrath and dignity acknowledged German suzerainty over regions taken from him by trickery and force. He felt deeply what he regarded as a British betrayal. As Coupland puts it: "The diplomatic structure so carefully built up and founded by Kirk for the past twelve years had collapsed at one blow of Bismarck's fist."

This incident made it plain even to the Foreign Office that their choice lay between last-minute action and the extinction of all British influence on the east coast of Africa—and on the Upper Nile. The following year Germany and Britain signed an agreement partitioning East Africa into 'spheres of influence'. This gave Germany all that she then demanded—including more than half the area offered ten years before to Mackinnon—and recognised the Sultan's sovereignty over

<sup>1</sup>See *The Exploitation of East Africa*. R. Coupland. O.U.P., 1938.

## KENYA

Zanzibar and Pemba, and over a ten-mile coastal strip along a part of the mainland. Next year the Imperial British East Africa Company was formed, with Mackinnon as the first chairman.

This, the last of the Chartered Companies ('an honest concern' wrote Kirk, 'and not a money-making one') soon found the task of 'opening up' a slice of savage Africa without trade or communications too heavy, especially when it became involved in religious and dynastic wars in distant Uganda. In 1895 it was taken over by the Government and the Union Jack flew at last over Fort Jesus.

The shade of Sir William Mackinnon, should it hover near his statue, would perhaps see in the progress of fifty years full justification of his hopes. Kilindini, some two miles from the town, has become the greatest port of eastern Africa north of Durban, serving at its modern deep-water berths the uses of some 8,000,000 people. All that is needed from outside by the inhabitants of Uganda and Kenya must pass through this single focus, and all that they have to exchange with the world. In flow bales of cotton piece goods, petrol, cement, fertilisers, tractors, machinery, cigarettes; out goes cotton, coffee, sisal, tea, butter, hides; sometimes an exchange of animals occurs, pedigree bulls passing an outgoing shipment of giraffes.

I saw the docks at night when the tall cranes, swinging like slow, prehistoric armoured beasts searching for food, were dropping net-loads of sacks into the floodlit hold of a vessel bound for Ceylon. Oilseeds, coffee, some kind of grain? The open extremities of long warehouses revealed bales and wooden cases stacked high. About it all hung the haunting smell of every ocean dock, a blend of sea, ropes, gunny-bags, pitch, spices and sea-soaked wood. Here one can prod with one's toe the foundation of two countries' aspirations. The newest school, the latest welfare committee, are but puffs of air unless these crates substantiate them; without these sacks and bales no visions can be realised, no enterprise endure.

## KILIMA KIU

From the lower slopes of the hills your eye is carried over enormous plains towards a low distant range and all is green, the spring-like green of grass bursting forth after rain. How fresh and vigorous the highland air seems after Mombasa's torridity! This farm lies 30 miles south of Nairobi and an easy day's run from the coast, but nearly 5,000 feet above sea-level, and there is no mistaking the highland's crispness, the firmness of the landscape, the sense of space and freedom. The hills that rise behind the house are encrusted with bush

## BANKS AND FARMERS

and acacia trees, dusted now with yellow blossom. In the early morning spiders' webs tremble on the flowering grasses, barbets and shrikes call and twitter, the world is newborn.

Thirty-five years ago the farm's owner came to a slice of raw Africa. No plough had ever marked it, no fence-post had been sunk, no seed sown. Not even a native digging-stick had touched it, for this was uninhabited, a no-man's-land between two hostile tribes. Two partners set their landmarks, and had to compress into a lifetime experience that in older countries has been gathered over centuries.

Breeding of ostriches was their first attempt—a failure. Now, at a dairy below the house, machines chug away and white-coated Wakamba (who have a mysterious but marked affinity for engines) preside over the pasteurisation of eight or nine hundred gallons of milk a day. Over these wide but carefully managed pastures—by no means always as green as now—graze herds of high-grade Ayrshire cows, served by pure-bred bulls of the bluest Scots' blood. Starting with native cattle yielding about 150 gallons each in lactation, and grading up, generation by generation, with pure-bred bulls, Frank Joyce has reached a point where the average yield of his cows is just 800 gallons. This would be a high average, on such a scale (about 350 cows in milk) even in Britain, where labour is skilled and droughts in an African sense unknown. Here, where sometimes all is brown as a board for months on end—not a blade of grass, it seems, and the dams dry—it is a fine achievement.

All this has been done bit by bit and by ploughing back profits, when there were any, for over 30 years. What with wars, droughts, slumps and the high cost of experience, good seasons have been few, and for long periods farms such as these, started without lavish capital, have been carried by the banks—not indeed as an act of philanthropy but at a cosy eight per cent. At such times bank managers were masters, their moods and preferences topics of anxious discussion, and everything—a new bull, a tractor, a holiday—hung on their word. But they also had their problems. One farmer, pressed for his overdue interest, drove a flock of sheep to the steps of the bank, correctly describing them as his only liquid assets.

The owners of Kilima Kiu, like others, survived these hard times. Now the herds are productive and this grey, humus-deficient yet fertile soil is turned by four-furrow disc-ploughs dragged by tractors working two shifts a day, and sometimes at night. Combines sweep efficiently over wheat-fields several hundred acres in extent, terraced and contour-ploughed. Frank Joyce even has a new car.



## KENYA

"I feel rather bad about it," said this large, hard-working, gay-hearted Irishman, looking delighted. "We simply couldn't help making money in the war."

That he did so was due not merely to high prices but to a lifetime's husbandry and to the skill of a daughter who ran this 20,000 acre concern single-handed, so far as Europeans went, while her father, back in the Army, took part in the Military Government of Ethiopia. Now, as a reluctant but duty-bound Legislative Councillor, he is away almost as much.

To have on your hands a farm with over 1,500 head of valuable stock, about 500 acres of cultivation, sheds-full of machinery and a large labour force when you are only just of age cannot be a light undertaking for a young woman. This is a district of large farms professionally managed, and the verdict of the local Agricultural Officer was:

"It was about the best run of the lot."

From the unpretentious, rambling little bungalow—the same which has served since the start—several concrete tanks can be seen down below. These are boreholes. The whole wide plain is without rivers or springs.

"We have nine working boreholes, and for every successful one we've had a failure. I believe the water-table is falling. Now we rely more and more on dams." From the top of a curious sugar-loaf hill which rises steeply from the plain you can see the whole farm spread out, and the dams—there are over 50 of them—wink like eyes in the sun. When dams dry up in the hot weather, cattle must walk long distances to the saving boreholes.

The milk goes to Nairobi and Mombasa. One of the biggest Nairobi customers is the Kikuyu owner of a 'hoteli' who turned up the other day in a taxi to ask for an increased supply. He buys 80 gallons a day, indicative of a sizeable business.

All Kilima Kiu's labour is drawn from 'squatters'—men who live with their families on the farm, get land to cultivate rent-free and, in this case, grazing for four head of cattle to each family. In return they must work when called upon for the farmer, at the ordinary rate of wages, for 240 days in the year. Here, as on many farms nowadays, they get certain other perks, such as a school for their small children and milk at nominal prices.

One quarter of the whole place—that is, 5,600 acres—is given over entirely to these squatters and their animals, and in some ways it is the most interesting part of the farm. It demonstrates how native agri-

## A THIN GREEN LINE

culture can, with skill and absolute control, be so managed as not to deplete the evanescent resources of the soil.

We stood beside a single line of sisal that divides Kilima Kiu from the Machakos reserve, part of the country of the Wakamba. It divides more than that. On one side lie scarred and naked hillsides brown as a chestnut and barren as a crater on the moon, deeply raked by gulleys. Granite boulders break like bones through starved flesh. To say that not a blade of green intrudes would be inaccurate, for rain has enticed a few spindly weeds through the brown. Half-way up the hill stands a group of decaying huts; a fence of thorn-bush marks the site of an abandoned shamba. Life, human and vegetable, has withdrawn. Man has squeezed this fruit dry, here withers the husk.

On Frank Joyce's side the grass is not luxuriant, for this is a spare country, but it is knit into an unbroken cover. All is green and employable. There are trees in the open and bush in the gulleys and several sheets of water hospitable to birds. Herds of native cattle graze among the thorn trees. Nearby is a dug field, shared among a group of families. It is terraced, the squatters must follow a set rotation and after three years of cropping, the land goes back to grass.

Squatter stock is held down to a maximum of 700 head on the 5,600 acres.

"That's a higher rate of stocking than on my own part of the farm," said Frank Joyce. "Here we run one beast to ten acres, but hope to do better as the pastures improve. Native stock eats less but we've reached the limit of safety. There's room for no more beasts or people on this land."

As for people: they pullulate. In round figures, there are 100 able-bodied men on this 5,600-acre block, 300 women and over 800 children—in actual fact, 69 per cent of the total population are children. Official estimates of population trends are generally based on a figure of 42 per cent children; even on this basis, the population will double in 30 years.

The implications are frightening. Adam's instructions were to multiply and replenish the earth, not to multiply and despoil it. That is what is happening on the other side of the thin green sisal line. It is what would happen here, within five years, were Frank Joyce not in a position to say: 'No more cultivation: no more cattle' on this particular bit of land.

"And the eight hundred odd children—what will happen to them?"

"There'll be no work for them here. There's no land in their reserve. They'll have to emigrate. But where to? That is the question."

## KENYA

The 5,600 'squatter acres' support only the families who live on them. The remaining 14,600 acres produce milk for about 10,000 daily, bread and meat for about 300, over and above all the needs of the labour.

### MACHAKOS

As our car twisted and turned among the ridges—my guide a young D.O. whose hobby is making musical notations of bird-song—it became apparent that no one could stop the Wakamba from cultivating on hillsides, since they have nothing but hillsides to cultivate on. Theirs is a tortured landscape, full of huge smooth towering rocks and deep valleys which turn into impetuous torrents after rain. Once upon a time all these hillcrests were forested, now they are as bare as a baby's bottom. To get grass long enough to thatch a building in Machakos township they had to send 50 miles.

Yet crops are still grown here, and a thick population scrapes a living, eked out in bad years by famine relief. There is good soil, but much less than there used to be; fertility, but it is running down; this is land in decline, but not yet annihilated.

I have seen hillsides just as steep as these and fully cultivated, and the soil stable for centuries. That was in Java and Bali, where every inch was bench-terraced, so that when the rice-fields were flooded they looked like ascending tiers of flashing mirrors, or a giant's crystal stairway. The Javanese did not wait for the Dutch to tell them how to do it; since time immemorial, with infinite hand-labour, the peasants built up and tended those faultless terraces—as Japanese and Arabs have done also, and many others.

In all their history the Wakamba have never evolved this form of self-protection, perhaps because, until the start of British rule, pressure of population had not reached the point of compulsion. And in 45 years of rule the Government has lacked the purpose and means to teach them. Now, after most of the horse has left the stable, it is trying to push the door gently to on the tail.

There has been no lack of warnings. It is 23 years since the Ulu Settlers' Association, a small body of local farmers, first called on the Government to check the damage being done in these Machakos hills. Thereafter commissions and individuals produced reports almost as regularly as Kamba women produced babies, and the Government's own expert, Mr. Colin Maher, wrote one so stark that the Colonial Office asked him to tone it down, and, when he refused, would not have it published.

All that Colin Maher and others said would happen in Ukamba has

## TOO LITTLE AND TOO LATE

happened, and more; he is still a soil conservation officer, and the gentlemen who dismissed his report as alarmist have knighthoods and positions of eminence in the counsels of the nation. And Ukamba still decays. In the last few years it has cost the Government over £100,000 to buy grain for sale at less than half its cost to the ever-multiplying and hungry people. Fifty years ago Machakos, the headquarters of their country, was renowned as a revictualling station on the caravan route to Uganda.

Several times the Government has lifted a finger to check the trouble—but always a little finger and always too late, when nothing less would have done than a strong arm in good time. And then what of human rights—compulsion, dictatorship, dispossession? It was a choice between the liberty of the subject and the preservation of the soil, between Western principles and African necessities. The rights won as against the duties, and authority tried to dispel its doubts by frowning on 'alarmist talk' of impending disaster.

Now, in Sir Philip Mitchell, Kenya has a Governor whose lifetime has been spent in Africa and who understands the needs and dangers as well as any man living. It has a leader, too, of vigour and vision. Can he set his machine to right the balance, to undo the harm? Or has time closed the door behind the last opportunity? The next few years will show.

A campaign to restore the soil with the co-operation of the people has been launched in Ukamba. As a first-aid measure, people are at last digging ditches and banks along the contour and making dams by voluntary effort. Yet only once, in our fifty-mile drive, did we pass a party of pick-wielders. The D.O. stopped the car.

"Wonder of wonders! *Men* actually terracing!"

Ditch-digging is looked on as women's work, and in a short while the women appeared from over the hillcrest where they had been drawing water, and began to wield their picks. The progress of this 'terracing' depends largely on the chief's convictions, authority and influence. There is no compulsion about it, at least in theory.

The trouble is that the Wakamba, famed in the past for their skill with poisoned arrows and their devotion, which persists, to beer, have themselves become poisoned with suspicion and look for the catch in every new idea.

"If they'd only agree with each other about something!" lamented the D.O. "Even if it was only to oppose us, that would be a start."

They are more nearly agreed about that than about anything else.

## KENYA

It is a tragedy that the Wakamba, so clever and once so friendly, so clannish and so independent, should have been so 'mucked about' by a vacillating and timid authority.

The climax came in 1938 when the Government, in the face of warnings from its own field officers and without getting the agreement of the people—indeed, such agreement would have been impossible to get—tried to reduce the cattle population by half in one fell swoop. This was the figure agreed by experts as necessary, so overcrowded were the pastures; yet such a drastic sudden cut was by its very nature impossible to secure without the use of force or heavy bribes. The Government was prepared to use neither.

The Wakamba resisted, of course. Police were sent to seize indiscriminately the fixed quota of beasts. The outraged tribesmen buzzed and sizzled. Some marched to Nairobi to see the Governor; here they squatted on the race-course and every day their women streamed in with supplies to their insanitary encampment. At last the Governor came to them, not they to him, and the destocking order was unconditionally revoked.

If a mistake had been made it was no doubt best to redeem it, but this débacle had the double effect of branding on inflamed minds distrust of the Government's intentions and at the same time convincing them of its pliancy. The Wakamba continued to cling so tenaciously to their half-starved animals that Liebeg's meat factory, started nearby for the very purpose of draining off some of their surplus stock, had to buy nine-tenths of its cattle in Tanganyika.

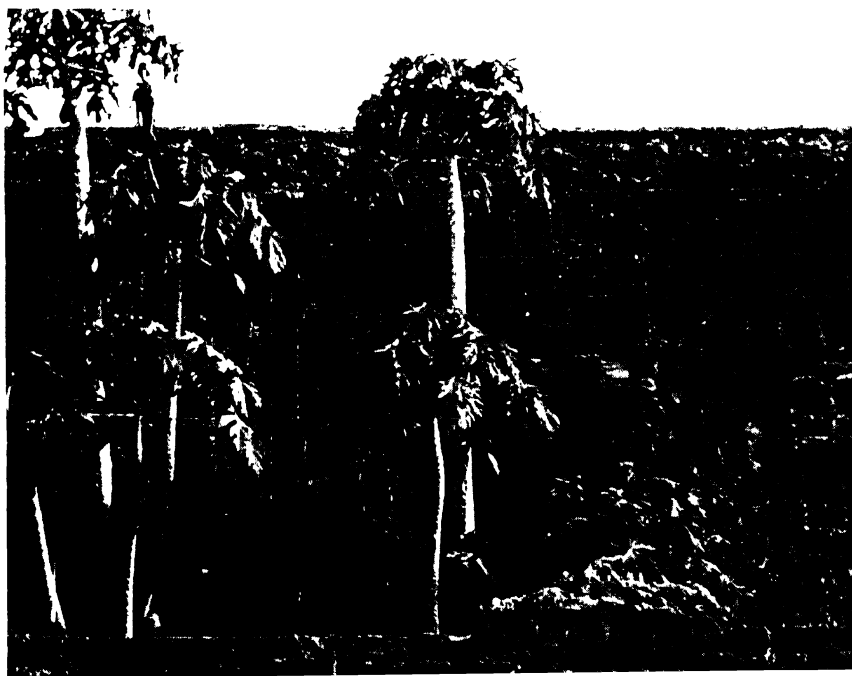
What can be done? One fact on which all agree is that about four times as many cattle are trying to squeeze a living out of the Machakos reserve as can possibly thrive there. (The actual figures are: estimated carrying capacity, 47,000 head; present numbers, 170,000 head.) These Wakamba beasts have turned into pathetic, degenerate animals no larger than donkeys. This state of affairs is a product of excellent intentions. In the bad old days diseases, especially rinderpest, periodically wiped out perhaps nine-tenths of the herds: a drastic method of keeping the equilibrium between man, beast and food supply, but an effective one.

Like a blundering rhino horned with desire for good, the white man charged on to the scene. He made war on death. This phenomenon, one stage in the eternal cycle of decay and regeneration, and as such accepted calmly by most orientals, has always frightened into blind action the Western mind, so adept at simultaneously devising new methods to promote and to postpone it. In this case the technique



Fort Jesus, Mombasa

Ruined Arab mansion, Lamu island





Ex-slave making twine : African settlement, Gedi

## MEN MUST GO

of postponement was applied. Men were protected against epidemics, tribal warfare and starvation to such good effect that the Machakos population is reckoned to have doubled in 25 years. Cattle followed suit. But science could not either create new land or quadruple the productivity of the old. And so these pastures have been torn and trampled to death.

Destocking is the obvious, indeed the only, remedy. It is not as simple as it sounds. The Machakos district is believed to hold about 50,000 families. To keep each family in milk and (most important) manure for the shambas, at least four of these scraggy beasts are needed. A simple sum puts the necessary stock population at 200,000 head—rather more than there are at present. And that is four times too many.

There is, and can only be, one remedy: people must go—perhaps 200,000 of them from the whole of Ukamba.

A population crisis of this sort has occurred in other countries and at other times; there is nothing new or even startling about it. History suggests that it can be resolved in two ways only. People must go either to land elsewhere—emigration; or to cities, to other occupations—industrialisation. By a combination of these two means Britain managed to support a population increase from nine to 40 millions in a century and to raise living standards at the same time. The people of Java successfully multiplied from four or five millions in 1820 to 45 millions in 1930.

How do the Wakamba stand? If all are to cultivate, they need at least another million acres. Kenya has scarcely any fertile land to which no one lays claim. They can take it, therefore, only from someone else: either from Europeans, or from their nomadic neighbours the Masai.

African political leaders and their now wide following call for the 'return' of land now occupied by white farmers, and secured to them by an Order-in-Council of 1939 which creates a European reserve. The white farmers, for their part, deny that they hold land to which the Wakamba can lay valid historical claim, and suggest that when you stand upon the boundary and see productive farmland in one direction and devastation on the other you look at a situation not arranged by nature but brought about by man. They ask whether it would help the country, or even in the long run the Wakamba themselves, if land on the productive side of the border were to be parcelled out in peasant holdings to become, in a few years, as run-down as land on the Wakamba side.



## KENYA

One thing is apparent: even if the Wakamba were to take all they want immediately, it could not satisfy them for long. And their plight is shared by several other tribes. The carcass of the 'White Highlands' would have to be carved among so many that little would fall to each plate, and that little would soon disappear.

As for the Masai: a suggestion that they should lease some of their grazing to the Wakamba was put up to a meeting of elders and warriors. It was turned down very flat. The Masai are a small tribe who graze their large herds over an enormous area, including some excellent agricultural land which has never seen a hoe. (They do not cultivate.) But all their lands are guaranteed to them by treaty, a treaty they are sternly resolved never to see revised.

## MAKUENI

The Wakamba have one neighbour, besides Masai and Europeans, from whom land might be taken—the tsetse fly. On the east their country flattens gradually towards the valley of the Athi. Here, between hills and river, lie bush-clad flats at present uninhabited save by game and tsetse. This is Makueni.

We saw grass again as we approached. The huts and shambas, before so thickly juxtaposed, thinned out, the hills became at once less continuous and more wild and jagged, great slabs of granite rearing up out of the earth. We crossed a dry river-bed and found ourselves suddenly among long lush grass, bare of trees and thorn-scrub.

"The fly-free belt," my companion explained. "Two miles wide and six long, plugged at each end by a rocky hill." This is to prevent the fly, driven out of its haunts by partial bush-clearing, from turning back into Machakos. Matters are complicated by the intermingling here of three species of tsetse, each with different habits.<sup>1</sup>

Just beyond, a big camp has sprung up. From the mouth of the supervisor's tent we could see a gang of men clearing bush with *pangas* (long double-bladed hacking knives) in one direction and a couple of tractor-drawn ploughs at work in another. The first bit of Makueni is being cleared for African settlement.

Lush as the land looks after generous rain, its staying power is rated so low that a hundred acres are needed—so they say—to support five beasts, and five beasts are needed for each family. The whole scheme aims at settling 1,200 families on about 150,000 acres. Out of the 40,000 to 45,000 families (at least) who ought to move, this is not a high proportion.

<sup>1</sup>*Glossina longipennis*, *G. brevipalpis* and *G. pallidipes*.

## ATTEMPTED SABOTAGE

"We're dividing the block into 'farms', each farm of two thousand five hundred acres," said the Settlement Officer in charge, who not long ago was commanding a battalion of the K.A.R. in Burma. "Each farm will have twenty families and a hundred head of cattle—no more. There'll be three hundred acres of arable on each block, cultivated for three years and then put down to grass—not just ordinary veld grass but something better, whatever the scientists say is right. We'll plough a hundred acres every year with tractors. After that each family will cultivate independently on the five-acre plot. But they'll have to follow a rotation. Everything will be supervised."

There is not a drop of surface water in the whole of Makueni.

"Five boreholes have been proved," said Mr. Balfour. "They go deep and some yield little, and five more have been failures." This does not suggest a well-watered country. The average rainfall is 25 inches, but averages mean little here. In some years less than 10 inches fall, in others over 40.

At three o'clock whistles blew and the gang on the opposite hillside stopped its somewhat desultory lopping of underbush as one man and wound back to camp, chanting a dirge-like but hearty song. There seemed to be a vast number of men.

"Fifteen hundred, at present," said Mr. Balfour. "They come for three months, as a rule, though some stay longer. I can't say they're flocking in, but the food attracts them." Those on famine relief may be ordered out to work, at ordinary wage rates, for three months of the year.

The cost of partial hand-clearing works out at about 15/- an acre—and 150,000 acres are to be cleared.

"Wouldn't it be cheaper to clear with machines?"

"We tried that. It was nearly four times as expensive, and the angle-dozers removed most of the topsoil as well as the bush."

And there was trouble of another kind. Hundreds of Wakamba lay down in front of the machines in an attempt to sabotage the whole project. Yet it was undertaken in their own interests.

'Political agitation' is the reason given. There are certain young men concerned only, as authority sees it, to stir up trouble on every possible pretext between people and Government, between African and European, and wreck all efforts to raise the condition of the people; or, as their well-wishers see it, to voice the people's wrongs, overthrow the colonial system and oust an alien ruling race.

The cost of settlement at Makueni works out at the staggering figure

## KENYA

of £400 a family. (Everything is free, the settler pays no rent or charges, even for his piped water or tractor-ploughed plot.) This, of course, puts the scheme right out of court as a practical means of dealing with over-population.

"Makueni must be looked on as a demonstration of the Government's good faith," I was told. "A token that we mean to help the Wakamba as much as we can."

For all this expenditure, nothing will come out of Makueni for the use of the outside world. It is no groundnut scheme. The aim will be an extension of subsistence farming: all that is grown will be eaten on the premises.

"The bark of certain trees yields a dye," said Mr. Balfour. "I've sent some to be analysed. We might extract gum arabic. And the frankincense tree grows here. That's quite an industry in the Sudan."

A little frankincense and myrrh hardly seems a lucrative return from an investment of £400 a family. The inspiration of Makueni is political, not economic.

After a cup of tea we drove along a rough track towards the Athi in search of a pride of lions seen the day before at a place called the Camp of Stones. This, one would say, is the perfect hunting-ground: neither open plain where a man finds no cover nor thick bush where thorns obstruct him. The twisted *combretum* bush, its thin trunks nobbly as apple trees and mellowed by a westering sun, rise from a sward now succulent and springy, and the tall graceful acacias quietly spread their branches against the sunset. A flash of brilliant blue and cinnamon brought the car to a standstill while my companions debated whether a bird eyeing us from the branches was the European or the lilac-breasted roller; the point settled, we clambered up a clump of high granite boulders.

No sign of human life intruded, no smoke of fires, no homing goat-herd. This was Africa as it used to be and soon will be no longer, lonely, magnificent and alive with secrets. Away stretches the world for ever, as it seems, into the sunset; empty, as you think, of all life, fresh from the hand of God; yet some movement catches your eye—a herd of impala grazing on a patch of green; across to your left hurries a white-tusked warthog, her four piglets trotting behind in single file; over there something tawny slips into a grove of thorn-threes—an oryx, a waterbuck, a lion? You think you are alone, but eyes are watching every movement; you think you are hidden, but nostrils quiver on the alert; you think all is silent, but a baboon barks from the rocks, a francolin calls, a redbuck gives his shrill long whistle.

## PUMWANI

In front lies the untouched Africa with its own unseen busy life; behind the gangs have passed, slashing out the bush, leaving the country half-naked.

"Over a thousand rhino have been destroyed," said Mr. Balfour. "The other game clears out, but the rhino have to be shot."

In a year or so there will be no rhinos and perhaps no smaller game between here and the Athi, but smoke will rise from the fires of the Wakamba with their round huts, their goats, their donkey-sized cows and their little plots of cultivation.

## NAIROBI

No shade breaks the beat of the sun on to biscuit-coloured dust caked by heat and never-ending footfalls. The low square houses, each encircled by its rim of shade, are built of the same earth and seem to grow out of it like fungi; they are roofed with rusty flattened debbis.

On the margins of the unpaved street and in the narrow verandas sit tailors at their sewing-machines, cobblers bending over ancient cracking shoes, cross-legged men who hammer on a sheet of old tin to fashion crude drinking mugs and cooking-pots. We stopped near a house where a band was practising, or talking about practising; a man stood by a big drum idly tapping it, others sat about with brass instruments. A group of women was gathered round them. Their short woolly hair was combed into ridges and the tight curls in each ridge neatly disposed. They were cheerful young ladies, plump and high-breasted, gaily dressed in printed cloths drawn about them to leave the glossy shoulders bare.

This was in Pumwani, one of the oldest and least brushed-up parts of African Nairobi. The houses—some you could fairly call hovels—date back to the days when Africans could build their own accommodation as they liked. What everyone liked was to let off rooms, often at exorbitant rents. As many as fourteen people have been found sleeping in one small room.

"There is only one cure for over-crowding," said the Municipal Native Affairs Officer, "and that is to build more houses. That's what we're doing. But Nairobi's native population is sixty thousand and growing every day. We reckon that even to re-house the *present* population well enough for every man in work to bring in his wife and family, we should need twenty-four thousand new dwellings. That's a lot of houses, and costs of building have about trebled since before the war."

## KENYA

We stood in a crescent newly sown with grass in the centre of one of Nairobi's six new housing estates, which between them will hold 11,000 people. The cottages all round were built of stone and roofed with tiles, and some had pleasing little gardens. Facing the crescent was a row of trim new shops. We entered one: a bakery, full of the crisp scent of new bread. The owner, a Jalu, and the employer of six men, bakes between 600 and 800 loaves daily.

"Africans are preferring bread to posho," he said. "Posho is the food of country people." In fact posho (maize flour) is still the staple of East Africa, but bread is more polite: educated clerks prefer it, and the Government approves of this trend, because maize yields are declining.

The cottages, built in staggered clusters, are of three sizes: big bears, middle-sized bears and little bears. In a middle-sized house, with two rooms and a kitchen, we found a tenant at home with his wife and three small children. He was a cook, he told us, at one of the cinemas, his monthly wage 80/-.

"I pay a rent," he told us, "of eighteen shillings every month. Yes, these are good houses, and I am glad to have got one. But the rent is high and there are too many thieves."

The rent of little bears is 10/- monthly for one room and a kitchen. Big bears have three rooms and the tenants, mostly clerks—the new aristocracy of these embryonic garden cities—pay 22/-. Though all these rents are high in relation to rising but still meagre wages, they are in fact less than half the economic rent, and the loss is divided equally between Government and Municipality.

All this is at Kaloleni, Nairobi's newest housing estate—or, as architects now say, 'neighbourhood unit'. The nucleus is the social hall built, like Mombasa's, out of beer-money.

There can be few British towns of comparable resources with a centre to equal Kaloleni's for comfort, size and elegance. The main hall will seat 600 and take a 1000 dancers on its polished mvule floor. Out of it open a large bar (native beer for 2½d. a calabash); a chop-house divided by high-backed seats into cubicles where good, cheap meals are served; a games room equipped for billiards, darts and table-tennis; and a carpeted sitting-room larger, I should say, and certainly better furnished than its opposite number at the Muthaiga Country Club—and, unlike that club, free of charge to all comers. The citizen of Kaloleni gets other free services: advice at the clinic, for instance, for his wife and babies and school meals for his children. But all his children may not find places. Of nearly 7,000 children in the

## NEW HOUSING ESTATE

town, only 1,700 can be squeezed in to the one Government and five Mission primary schools.

"Nairobi has a curious population," said my guide. "Nearly four-fifths of all the Africans are men. Children number only about eleven per cent instead of between forty and fifty as in the Colony at large. Men can't bring their families with them because they can't find accommodation and because their wages are too low to keep them if they did, and also because the wives stay behind to grow food and hang on to the shambas.

"This means that our building programme may do little to relieve over-crowding. As soon as a man secures a house he sends for his family, and that merely pushes up the population. If wages were to be raised to a point where the ordinary lower-paid African could support a wife and family here without the proceeds of a shamba, and if we could provide enough houses, the population would simply treble overnight and overcrowding would be as bad as ever. Nairobi is a sort of giant magnet. People hear of the high wages and don't realise that the high cost of living (and it's going up) makes them no better off."

The provision of housing does, indeed, seem like a labour of Sisyphus. Perhaps it will never be adequate; but, ignoring logical conclusions—wisely in this case—this energetic Municipality with its elected mayor goes ahead as fast as money will allow. The difference between Pumwani and Kaloleni is not only one between mud and stone, it is a difference between two assessments of the human needs of the African and between two visions of what Nairobi might become.

These housing estates have to be managed and controlled. Few tasks could be harder, for their people are drawn from many tribes; they have no cohesion, discipline or community pride and little respect for law and order; some are on or below the borderline of poverty; all are opportunists, a number are outright criminals and many live by their wits. Scallywags come from all quarters, professional politicians who live on the proceeds of discontent have set up shop and a strident and often scurrilous vernacular press gives prominence to every grievance and currency to every wild and inflammatory rumour.

The policy of the Municipality (and here one suspects the quiet but deep influence of Tom Askwith, the Native Affairs Officer) is to encourage people, so far as possible, to manage and control themselves.

## KENYA

"Last year," he said, "we started village committees for each estate—twelve men put forward by their fellows at a sort of parish meeting. They aren't paid, but they acquire local prestige and have powers to turn people out—strictly speaking, to recommend that we give them notice—if they don't behave.

"By and large, these committees have been a great success. They've been far tougher than I should have dared to be. They even turned out a member of the Advisory Council. If we'd tried to do that we should have been accused of every form of oppression and dictatorship under the sun."

The African Advisory Council is another important part of this training scheme for local self-government. Like its Mombasa counterpart, it meets once a month to consider any aspect of African welfare that may be raised by any of its twenty-odd members.

"It's virtually an association of associations," Tom Askwith said. The chairmen of the village committees belong. So do several politicians and the heads of the tribal associations.

These guilds of tribesmen still exercise a lot of influence, although authority looks on them with a tepid eye, mainly because they are thought to keep alive old animosities. Several 'wars' between Kikuyu and Jalu—by far the two biggest factions—have broken out from time to time, and once the Kikuyu started to round up all uncircumcised men, threatening to remedy their deficiency; the police had to intervene.

Two members of this Advisory Council now sit side by side with elected Europeans and Indians on the Municipal Council which runs Nairobi, free, in the main, of Government control. A continuous two-way traffic of ideas and explanations flows between the Advisory Council and the Municipality, with its European majority and its final powers, the two African Councillors acting as go-betweens.

"The Municipal Council has really tried to meet the wishes of the Advisory Council whenever it can," I was told. "Both sides have learnt something. The Africans are getting a much clearer idea of the difficulties of running a big show like Nairobi—in fact they've changed their views on several points after hearing the facts from their own African Councillors.

"A dangerous and destructive feeling of frustration had been growing up among the better educated elements. I don't say this feeling has died out, but it's been much less in evidence since the Advisory Council got going. There's plenty of discontent in Nairobi, Heaven knows, but most of it seems directed against things affecting the whole country

## ‘HOTELIS’

rather than against actual conditions in Nairobi. I don't say they're satisfied with what's being done, but I think they are beginning to realise that we're trying, and that Rome wasn't built in a day."

At the moment, crime has everyone beaten. Every house in Kaloleni has been broken into within the last year.

In his office near the social hall Albert, the efficient African supervisor, told us how he had organised the residents into a body of voluntary police who make themselves responsible for the good behaviour of the citizens and carry out raids on suspected malcreants. After 13 years as a clerk in the Town Hall, there is little that Albert does not know of the ins and outs of municipal government; socially, his salary of 350/- a month (with a house) admits him into the aristocracy. The residents respect and obey him. His special police have done well in reducing small offences, but housebreaking is mostly gang-organised, beyond their scope.

One of the Municipality's most enterprising projects is a sort of British Restaurant in the business part of the town, designed to serve 1,000 meals a day to African workers at one-third the price they must pay in African-owned 'hotelis'.

I have been into several of these 'hotelis'. They are not as a rule attractive places: dark, crowded, fly-infested, smelly, the customer sits at a dirty trestle table and is served with a plate of 'stew', as often as not little more than vegetables done in watery gravy, and a *chupatti*, for as much as a shilling. This falls so heavily on the lower-paid African that often he eats nothing until he gets home.

The municipal canteen does indeed present a contrast. It is large, light, airy and scrupulously clean. Under European supervision, half a dozen cooks in white overalls prepare the food. For less than 4d. the customer gets a plate of real meaty stew with tea, bread and jam: a meal that any European would be thankful for, eaten in surroundings that none should despise.

The African owners of 'hotelis' comprise a large and locally powerful vested interest. They have fought the municipal canteen with weapons of rumour and calumny. This attempt to provide Africans with good food at low prices has become an attack on 'African liberties'. All sorts of fantastic stories have been set in circulation, including the hoary rumour about European 'medicines' to destroy African potency.

Such gatherings of ignorant and half-disgruntled people, brought up in the shadow of credence in magic and spells, as are to be found in



## KENYA

any big town like Nairobi are naturally gullible, and the soil is as productive of bizarre beliefs as horse-dung of mushrooms. It was touch and go whether the canteen would in fact catch on; as it proved, the quality offered was too good to miss and the benches to-day are well filled.<sup>1</sup>

If the municipal canteen can sell twice as good a meal for one-third of the cost charged in 'hotelis' and come out on it—and this includes the salary of a European manager—it is plain that 'hoteli' keepers are not doing badly. It is often said that the greatest exploiters of Africans are Africans; indeed, it would be strange if the dark-skinned races alone among mankind had escaped the vices of greed and selfishness; From such incidents it appears that their ration of virtue is no greater than ours.

Who are these African politicians who, from a European point of view, seem always to be queering the pitch and, from the African, carry forward the banners of freedom?

In search of some of them I was guided to the headquarters of the Kenya African Union, climbing a flight of outside steps to the upper storey of an Indian-owned warehouse. Here, in cubicles of beaver-board, were found the outgoing secretary and newspaper editor, Mr. Francis Khamisi, and the new executive officer, Mr. Frederick Nganga.

It is difficult to assess either the scope or the sincerity of the K.A.U. Its proclaimed intentions are such as to gratify everyone working for the advance of the African; its slogans are the canons of social justice in other lands.

"We want equal pay for equal work," said Frederick Nganga. "When Eliud Mathu came back from an English university, he was offered a job by the Education department at fifteen pounds a month. Europeans with inferior qualifications were getting three or four times as much. That is unjust.

"We want more schools, and freedom from the Missions in education. Because of this, we Africans are starting our own schools without the Government's help. We have already one hundred and forty such independent schools in Kikuyu, receiving no Government money.

"We want the colour bar abolished in all its many forms. I was a clerk in the Education department, and I worked with a white boy of

<sup>1</sup>Since this was written local politicians, through the vernacular press, have called a boycott of this canteen and of all the municipal beer-shops on the ground that the monopoly of brewing infringes African liberty, and because European beer is not sold. As all the profits of the beer-shops go to African welfare, the sufferers will be Africans themselves.

## THE KENYA AFRICAN UNION

my own age. If I did wrong, I was corrected. So was the white boy; but when his boss spoke to him, he said: 'Do not tick me off in front of a native!'

Again and again, in my experience, when discussing this question of the colour bar you come up against the little personal slight, perhaps unwittingly delivered; against continual outcrops through the crust of behaviour of a code of racial superiority. It is these little things that enter into the soul and fester; these little things that lie behind the suspicion, obstinacy and non-co-operation on which all our effort in Africa may yet founder.

"Once a European woman's car stuck in the mud," said Mr. Nganga. "A European came to her assistance. I was standing by with some friends. Instead of asking us politely to push, this European simply beckoned with his finger, as if we were bound to obey."

The trouble with this hypersensitive attitude is that it imposes an impossibly high standard of manners on every member of a race, and invests with a racial significance every human lapse. A man may tread on my feet in a bus; I mutter curses on him for a clumsy lout; but if I am black I say: 'He did that because he thinks I'm nothing but a nigger!' and call down vengeance on all his race.

"We Africans," said Mr. Nganga, with an engaging frankness, "are easy to handle, but white men use the wrong way. We respond to friendship very quickly. Yet how many of them have invited us to their homes? In offices, we share the work and are on good terms together; at half-past four, a curtain falls."

It is this possibility of a warm human relationship that draws Africans towards the Indians across a gulf of economic rivalry.

"Frankly," said the K.A.U. executives, "we cannot decide how to choose between Indians and Europeans. We do not like Indian business methods. We know they often cheat us. We prefer the European, and know that we get a fairer deal. But we cannot understand him. The Indian—we can go into his shop and talk on equal terms. He will offer us a glass of beer. We feel that he is a man as we are. The European is a mystery."

At present Indians are making a strong bid for an African political alliance. Their rallying cries are good ones: the unity of the coloured races against the white oppressor. There is more to it than slogans; African newspapers are printed on terms of easy credit on Indian presses; Indians give money to such bodies as K.A.U.; African political leaders are made welcome in Indian houses; one of the K.A.U. officials (Mr. James Beauttah) is now touring India as a guest. The latest move,

## KENYA

which has aroused great African enthusiasm, is the award of five scholarships to take Kenya Africans to Indian universities.

It is hard, I suggested, to assess the scope and sincerity of K.A.U. The sincerity, because methods do not always seem as honest as proclaimed intentions.

To take a single example: one matter on which all just men agree, is that the future of Kenya hangs on whether or no a drastic change in the treatment of African lands can soon be brought about. Government officers and many African chiefs are striving against time to educate and persuade the people to adopt the needful practices. They look naturally for support to the educated African who can understand the issues, and to the support of his newspapers. In this they have been disappointed. The politicians of Nairobi have not merely opposed the necessary measures, but have actually sabotaged them.

Of many instances, one may suffice. A Veterinary Officer managed to persuade the people of one district in Kikuyu to reduce the numbers of their cattle and to dip the rest against East Coast fever. The Government built a dip and the elders set up culling committees; all was voluntary, and at first all went well.

Then the vet proposed to extend the system to another district. The people, impressed by what was going on next door, agreed readily and a date was fixed for culling to start.

Before that day came, a mass meeting was called and addressed by politicians from Nairobi. The whole scheme was called off. Even in the district where it had been running so smoothly, it had to be abandoned. There is no culling and dipping to-day in South Nyeri.

Only one motive fits the nose-cutting actions of these Kikuyu politicians. They believe that improvement of African lands would weaken the case for the African seizure of the White Highlands. The more African lands deteriorate, the stronger will be the pressure—or so it seems to these politicians—that can be brought to bear on the Government to give way. So to the ordinary credulous folk these leaders say: "Don't listen to the Europeans who tell you to plant grass and kill your old cows. Don't you know why they say this? Because they want to seize the land themselves! Don't you know why they want to build dips? So that dips will be ready for the settlers when they evict you!"

They know as well as the Governor himself that such stories are lies but they do not hesitate to spread them, even if this promotes the ruin of thousands of acres and the hunger and misery of their owners, either to gain—as they hope—their political objective, or from a

## THE VERNACULAR PRESS

blind, unreasoning hatred and suspicion. That is why their sincerity seems hard to assess.

The tragedy of it is that their methods are of all methods the least likely to gain their ends, unless at the price of anarchy. For the argument against making over the European highlands to Africans which is most irrefutable is that to do so would be to throw to the wolves almost the last reserves of soil fertility. Could they but see it, proof that Africans could genuinely and freely farm their land in such a manner as to conserve and improve soil fertility would be far and away the most potent argument they could advance in support of their claim for land out of the White Highlands.

How is it that such a small group of Nairobi politicians can call a tune to which so many dance? One answer is perhaps intimidation.<sup>1</sup> Another lies in the power of the press.

There are in Nairobi about half a dozen weekly newspapers in native languages. Although perhaps nine Africans out of ten cannot read, each one who can do so passes the contents round by word of mouth with all the authority of one who has spoken with the oracle.

Many people equate mass education with mass literacy. They believe that enlightenment, like a rising sun, will bring new vision to a people avid for books on hygiene, co-operation and world affairs. But the staple reading matter of the newly literate is in fact these vernacular newspapers, which drop into their minds, dram by dram, race hatred's subtle poison.

Not that politics are their only concern. Correspondents discuss the bride-price—to pay or not to pay?—every week and plead for such good causes as the abolition of the custom of smoking cigarettes the wrong way round, less cruelty to donkeys, better manners in buses, the founding of an institution where 'girls could learn that prostitution is not the only means of livelihood'. Nevertheless the tone of some of these papers is not merely anti-Government, anti-white and declamatory but subtly stimulating to the reader's sense of self-pity. All that happens is the fault of others; the African is 'cheated of his birthright'; let 'foreigners' remove themselves (or be removed) and wealth will flow, hardship cease, the land smile. It is natural that

<sup>1</sup>An inquiry into a riot following a strike at Uplands bacon factory in September, 1947, revealed that witch-doctors called in by the organisers had conducted rites which included pulling off the heads of chickens and threatening with death by sorcery anyone who did not join the strike. The strike's objective was to force the management to dismiss a clerk who had refused to subscribe to a fund raised to support the 'independent' teachers' training college, of which Mr. Jomo Kenyatta was the principal.

## KENYA

these newspapers should point always to the alien villain, never to the villain within; but, in playing the part of perpetual flatterer, they raise up vanity and nourish that irresponsibility, already great, that is—and not only in Africa—the snake in democracy's Eden.

Who are the editors and policy-makers? Among the first are Francis Khamisi, a fluent, intelligent ex-schoolmaster trained in journalism on the *East African Standard's* native paper, the secretary of K.A.U. until a recent acrimonious parting, and still a Municipal Councillor and editor of *Kenya*, a weekly paper in Swahili; and Wycliff Awori, son of a minister of the Church, recently returned from a trip to England disillusioned about the prospects of succour but breathing fire and brimstone, and editor of *Radio Posta*, the first African daily. Leader among the politicians is Eliud Mathu, Kikuyu ex-schoolmaster and Balliol man, now member of Legislative Council and of most of the proliferous boards and committees of Nairobi: 'moderate', quick, good-mannered, intelligent, busy, and uneasily poised between the white devil and the deep black stirring sea of African resentment and ambition. (He is said to be a good poker-player; if so, the game's lessons should be useful.) He is the sucking dove; among the roaring lions is Chege Kibachia, a Kikuyu who quotes Communist propaganda, presides over the newly-formed African Workers' Federation and played a leading part in the Mombasa strike.<sup>1</sup>

And behind all these is the figure of Jomo Kenyatta, the Kikuyu with the small pointed beard and piercing eyes whose ambitions and ingenious mind directs African political strategy from the wings.

I met Jomo Kenyatta when he was studying anthropology, years ago, under Malinowski at the London School of Economics. He was the sort of African who in London and New York is often invested with a princely statue. His pointed beard gave him a Mephistophelian look, his manner was suave and ready. As a speaker he is something of a spell-binder. At the recent wedding reception of a chief's son, attended by several hundred guests of all races, the usual speeches won less attention than the ice-creams, until Jomo Kenyatta rose. Then not even the clinking of a spoon broke the rapt silence of the audience.

In experience, guile and, above all, political training, I doubt if there is any Kenya African to match Mr. Kenyatta. For the last fifteen years he has lived in England, lecturing and writing, and learning much of the technique known among Communists as 'agitprop'. (It is said—I do not know with what truth—that he served a spell in Moscow with

<sup>1</sup>He has since been 'deported within the Colony' for making a seditious speech in which he threatened to cut off the ears of anyone who refused to join in the next strike.

## THE UNITED KENYA CLUB

the Third International.) After this long apprenticeship he has come back to place his experience at the service of his people, first as principal of the 'independent' teachers' training college at Githunguri, now as president of K.A.U. Since his return there has been an intensification of political unrest, signs of a more professional organisation and talk of general strikes. Of course, this may be a coincidence.

I had no opportunity to renew our acquaintance; in any case, I might have failed. An Englishwoman who travelled out on the same ship, encountering him the other day in Government Road, stopped to exchange a greeting; cutting her dead, he swept into his motor car. "He does not like to be seen speaking to Europeans," she was told. Clearly, his observance of the colour bar is strict.

Nairobi is not all racialism and agitation. The brotherhood of man has a branch here too; it meets on Wednesdays for a cold luncheon in the British Legion hall. This is the United Kenya Club, open to all races, and so managed that membership is equally divided between Africans, Indians and Europeans.

To start this club was a leap in the dark, for prejudice and suspicion might so easily have strangled it, or the even more baneful opponent apathy have brought it down. But it was launched sensibly, in a small way with nothing grandiose about it. (Once more the hands of Tom Askwith and his wife were at work.) The organisers were taken aback by its immediate success among all races. Now there is a long waiting list of would-be members.

"It's as hard to get into as the Athenæum," someone said in the ante-room where we assembled. About fifty people came. I sat between an Indian business-man and an African official from the Town Hall; an ex-Governor presided and several Legislative Councillors were there; one of the problems, in fact, is to keep down the notables, lest they crowd out the ordinary folk.

The United Kenya Club, in brief, has gone with a swing from the start. It proves afresh that, given enterprise and tact and common sense, the races can co-operate and can meet together on equal terms as human beings; it suggests that, here in Nairobi, many want to do so, and enjoy it when they do. Here is an acorn from which the hope of Africa may spring.

Must industry be always rust-corrupted, girded with scrap? It seems so, even in Nairobi, where beyond the railway sidings brown puddles between acid-smelling sheds reflect towers dedicated to chemicals, and the chimneys of hydrogenation plants. The air smells of oil from

## KENYA

coconuts and cotton-seed. Here fats are refined and packed in tins, to fill parcels for Britain as well as to meet local needs.

These industries are war babies. Had it not been for a form of protection more absolute than any to be conferred by tariffs—the complete cutting off of certain classes of imports—they could never have been established. And they were lucky in other ways. It so happened that many of the Italian prisoners-of-war held in Kenya were craftsmen. Some of these men, becoming ‘co-operators’, used their skill to start the making of pottery, fibre boards, refractory bricks and other things, and taught what they could to Africans.

Now six industries make up the group under the control of the East African Industrial Management Board. They are state-owned: not merely nationalised but conceived and brought to birth in the womb of officialdom; and three separate and jealous Governments jointly finance and manage them.

The first earthenware vessels made here—cheap cups and saucers—were so coarse and crude that no one would have looked at them had imported rivals been available; but they were not, and the potters learnt as they went along. Now their products are vastly improved. In Malindi I bought a very pleasant cup and saucer, thick, but of good design and a decent pale buff colour, for two shillings.

“Last year was a bad one,” said the managing director, an able and assiduous New Zealander. “We had a high proportion of seconds and thirds.” He handed me a teapot in a sort of mottled colour. “It was because of the abnormal rains.”

Rain had soaked the firewood and a rising water-table dampened the kilns. The result was too low and too unsteady a firing temperature, and the mottled glaze.

“And this year, for the first time, we’re meeting competition from imported goods—and without our Italians. Pottery is coming in now from India, South Africa and the U.K. on a bigger scale than before the war. In spite of this we’ve sold the whole of our output, which has been on the scale of about one hundred and twenty thousand pieces a month.

“It’s still a seller’s market, but we don’t expect that to last. We’ve got to raise our quality and output. And our answer is nearly complete.”

That answer has been worked out by one of the leading pottery experts in Britain, until recently managing director of Minton’s and now in charge of these East African works. It is called the tunnel kiln. This invention, as I understood it, is really something revolutionary

Kilima Kiu







Contour ditching in Machakos Reserve

## EAST AFRICAN INDUSTRIES

in the pottery world. It is mobile, if only just so, at the rate of three inches an hour. The trolleys, packed with raw pottery, take 30 hours to complete their journey, connecting as they go with electric filaments which exactly control and modulate the firing temperature.

"Once the kiln is working," Colonel Griffiths said, "we shall have some of the most up-to-date equipment in the world."

The inventor added: "And once we have the equipment there's no technical reason why we shouldn't make porcelain here as good as any in the world. We have the clays and the glazes—but we haven't the market. So we must aim at cheap earthenware for the native market—and because it's cheap it doesn't have to be nasty."

And then there is the question of skilled labour.

"In Britain, it takes seven years to make a potter," Mr. Campbell said. "We can't give that sort of training here. In the first place there are scarcely any skilled craftsmen to do the teaching, in the second place we can't bind the African to an apprenticeship. Without that, proper training is impossible."

"High labour turnover is our trouble," the managing director confirmed. "Some Africans show real aptitude and learn quickly. A skilled English potter can turn out a steady eighteen hundred pieces a day, these Africans average nine hundred after only one year's training. But then they stick. Just when you've got them proficient, they disappear—go off for a year's holiday, perhaps. If they come back, you find they've forgotten it all and must start again at the beginning."

Here is a chance, one would think, for different and perhaps a steadier kind of education. The only notion of training overseas that seems to enter anyone's head is to send students to universities. Yet is it only to future teachers, journalists and politicians that we have something to impart? Is not the tradition of craftsmanship as valuable? The student of pottery (or farming, or engineering, or any other craft) living and working side by side with the English practitioner would surely learn as much of what is now called 'the British way of life' as an undergraduate, and more, perhaps, of value to himself and to his country. If Africans cannot take out indentures in Kenya, perhaps Britain could admit a few.

"Don't run away with the idea," I had been warned, "that by starting industries we can absorb hundreds of thousands of surplus people off the land. Take this group: only half a dozen, but they saturate East African demand for the things they make. Ask how many men they employ."

## KENYA

The answer to this question is 40 Europeans, about 30 Asians and 843 Africans.

These industries are not the only ones; others have started to manufacture soap, matches, cement, boots and shoes, blankets, brushes, and more will follow. It is early days yet. Even so, the numbers of men employed are insignificant.

Two things cramp and confine such industries: lack of markets and lack of fuel.

You cannot sell things to people unless they have money to spend. The spending power of East Africa's 13,000,000 Africans (Europeans are too few to count as consumers, the 200,000 Asians a small factor) is so low that they can support only the smallest industries making the cheapest goods. As for exports, labour is said to be too inefficient, and costs of transport too high, to permit East Africa to stand a chance in competition with, for instance, India, whose skilful and industrious people toil long hours for a small wage.

Yet this argument, that purchasing power is too low, must surely have applied in every country when industrialisation first began. The very industries themselves, once launched, put money into people's pockets and so enable them to buy more goods. In such a way a country may gradually raise itself, as many have, by its own bootstraps. But this takes time.

Lack of fuel has been an even tougher nut. Kenya itself, so far as geologists have been able to discover, has no coal, no oil, and inadequate water-power. Tanganyika has coal; but nature's perversity has placed it in the far south, as far as it could possibly lie from centres of population and existing railways. Uganda has water. These reserves, impounded in a system deriving from the world's second largest lake, lie not at the back of beyond but at the hub and centre of population.

Now a scheme has reached the hatching stage to build a great hydro-electric plant below the Owen Falls, near the point of issue of the White Nile from Lake Victoria. Power so generated will be carried cheaply to Kampala and Jinja in Uganda and to Kisumu in Kenya, stimulating, one may hope, at these crowded centres, the rise of industries which will employ at good wages many more than the few thousands already learning—and, almost invariably, liking—the factory habit.

Much hangs on the translation into practice of these paper schemes. Industries must come or the land will perish, and with the land, the people. Politics will not save them, neither more 'democracy' nor less of it, nor the conquest of ill-health, nor better nourishment; nor

## LOCUSTS

would their fate be averted were schools to rise on every hilltop, 'education' to come to every child and literacy to every adult. Too many people on too little land is a dilemma that leaves all the welfare and all the goodwill in the world powerless and doomed.

Without vision, the people perish; so they do without bread; and one generally leads to the other.

Fifteen years ago East Africa suffered from the worst locust outbreak in living memory. Down from the north, over from the west came swarm after swarm of these insects, innumerable as raindrops, and in their path every green blade and shoot was eradicated. Over reaches of country as large as England crops were simply wiped out. Millions of people would have gone hungry and thousands would have starved to death as their fathers did, had not local Governments been able to import Argentine maize.

Nothing is more mysterious than the periodic gatherings in the waste places of these grasshoppers, prompted by an instinct that in-between-times seems to disappear completely, only to thrust up again when the hour comes. The conditions which bring about such assemblies and migrations are not yet fully understood. Outbreaks go in cycles, but there seems to be little regularity about them. Since the invasion of 1930-33 research has been carried out in many parts of the world, and perhaps the greatest practical step taken towards mastering one of the seven plagues of Egypt was the setting up in London of an international centre under a world authority, Dr. B. P. Uvarov, to plot and map the movements of locust swarms all over the Middle East and Africa, and to warn countries lying in the path of danger. For locusts disregard international boundaries, and the swarms that devastate the crops of Tanganyika to-day may have started their migrations in Transjordan or Baluchistan.

The first-fruits of this work were gathered in 1942, when maps in London showed clusters of pins and the clusters started to move south from Arabia, Persia and other parts of the Middle East. There was by this time an anti-locust headquarters in Cairo and teams working in the Arabian hinterland to destroy swarms before they took off. In 1943 an Anti-Locust Directorate was set up in East Africa, and at its modest offices which I visited here in Nairobi I was told:

"We have no doubt that if we hadn't had plenty of warning, this outbreak in nineteen-forty-three of the desert locust would have been every bit as bad as the disastrous one of nineteen-thirty." And for the people, very much more disastrous; for in 1930 produce

## KENYA

was to be had for the paying from overseas; in 1943 none could have been imported.

As it was these officers, who are self-effacing and cautious men, were able to say: "We got that outbreak almost completely under control. One or two small swarms escaped. One of them did in five hundred acres of maize in one-and-a-half hours, another wiped out a thousand acres of wheat in a night. That shows what might have happened. But the great bulk of the swarms were destroyed."

This man who was talking to me in a small room full of maps, talking in such a matter-of-fact and take-it-for-granted way, was surely describing one of the greatest triumphs of research and organisation of our time. Ever since man first learnt to till the soil, these locust swarms have been coming down on him at intervals like the wrath of God to undo all his labours, and he has been as helpless before them as before the drought or the thunderbolt. Until perhaps the last half-century, it did not occur to him that he had any hope of protection.

And now—and with scarcely a flicker of interest, it would seem, from the world at large—this age-old plague has been quietly mastered. Even in Africa, where all know locusts and fear them, the very existence of this Anti-Locust Directorate is known only by a handful; the careful piecing-together carried out in Uvarov's London centre has gone unsung. Very few in Britain realise that they contribute towards the locust defence of East Africa over £400,000 a year, while the three local Governments find £200,000 between them. There can be few sums better spent.

How has this victory been won? 'Intelligence' is the essence of it all. News comes in to this nerve-centre in Nairobi that a swarm has been reported in some remote region of Kenya's northern frontier, or over the Ethiopian border far from roads, or in the wastes of Somalia. A mobile column starts off. (The Directorate disposes of a fleet of some 700 trucks.) It carries simple equipment for the 'power dusting' of swarms with a chemical known as DNOC, and large quantities of bait, as a rule damaged posho or coffee husks impregnated with gammexane, to be scattered in the path of the newly hatched hoppers. It is no simple matter to spread this bait over literally thousands of square miles of barren country. Desert locusts prefer to breed in waterless regions, and often trucks must travel great distances over roadless terrain carrying water to mix with the bait. A satisfactory dry bait is one of the goals of the researchers.

Now anti-locust teams are preparing for a big campaign in Ethiopia, in one of the regular breeding grounds. For although cycles rise and

## THE CONQUEST OF RINDERPEST

fall, like cycles of sunspots and lemmings, there is never a time when no locusts are breeding, and East Africa will always—if it values its safety—need to maintain its defences.

Only if these upsurgings are checked in time can the crops be saved. That was achieved in 1943 because conditions of war conferred on Allied Forces the power and the means to act quickly and to over-ride national frontiers. The campaign which saved East Africa was ultimately directed from the headquarters in Cairo of a branch of the Middle East Supply Centre and was waged not only in Kenya and Somalia but in Saudi Arabia, in Persia and in Iraq.

That organisation dissolved with the end of war. What will happen next time? (A 'next time' will come as certainly as next winter.) Those locust maps which lurk in a sort of cellar in South Kensington prove that we dwell indeed in one world, and seem to suggest that mankind hangs on to Africa only by its eyelashes: those few hairs being a handful of scientists.

### KABETE

It is odd that, in this age of technology, administration gets the plums and specialists the batter. In Nairobi Government House, the Law Courts, the Town Hall, are fine imposing buildings, the men who work in them enjoy all that is going of local honours and prestige; a few miles out the Scott laboratories are housed in a group of old and dilapidated sheds rather like railway labour lines; yet on the work of the four scientists employed here, whose joint salaries would not equal the Governor's pay, largely depends the ability of this agricultural country to carry on its agriculture successfully against the various insect and fungus pests that beset it, and from their work derives such knowledge as exists—and it is still very scanty—about chemistry and structure of the Colony's soils.

The veterinary laboratories a few miles further on are more imposing to look at, but almost as under-staffed. And the vets here not only carry out fundamental research into about half-a-dozen diseases but run a vaccine factory. In the last two years, some eight million doses have gone out from this centre to all parts of eastern Africa.

Rinderpest accounted for most of these. Since 1942 a new method, discovered at Kabete, has been used. The virus passes through the blood of goats and is thus attenuated; the goats' spleens are dried and frozen *in vacuo* and sent forth for injection, in minute quantities, into cattle. All native young stock is now inoculated free and compulsorily, and one injection confers lifelong immunity. So successful has this

## KENYA

method proved that rinderpest has almost been eliminated everywhere north of Tanganyika's Central Railway.

Yet the triumph was not complete. A certain breed of cattle, the long-horned beasts of Ankole, in Uganda, could not stand up to this goat virus, and many died; nor can it be used with safety on high-grade and pedigree beasts. So a new method is being tried: one evolved, curiously enough, in an island in the St. Lawrence where, in the war, American, Canadian and British scientists jointly produced and accumulated a reserve of attenuated virus in case the enemy attempted to spread rinderpest among the herds of North America. The virus is passed through embryo chickens in the egg. Some of this has been flown to Kabete, and more has been started off locally in big electric incubators.

Of all cattle diseases the most baffling is perhaps East Coast fever, for which there is still no remedy but dipping to kill the ticks—at once expensive and hard to organise—and which carries off about three-quarters of all the native stock-owners' calves. The search for a drug or a serum still goes on hopefully, as it does for foot-and-mouth disease, whose invisible virus is passed through and through the brains of mice in the hope that it will grow mild enough to confer immunity without harming the cattle.

The deadliest of all African diseases is perhaps trypanosomiasis, the equivalent in cattle of sleeping sickness in man. More attention has hitherto been given to the tsetse flies that carry it than to the tiny snake-like parasite in the blood that does the damage. Yet the chances of finding an effective drug or method of immunisation are not out of court. Two drugs are in fact used with a good deal of success to kill the infection in the blood;<sup>1</sup> one of them has cured up to three-quarters of the stricken animals; but it does not prevent re-infection. The matter is complicated by the presence in this part of Africa of at least half-a-dozen species of trypanosome, and by the fact that animals seem able to develop some measure of immunity to certain strains within a single species, and then to succumb to a different strain. All this is 'fundamental research' which will need years of plodding pursuit, as often as not up blind alleys, before notions are hit upon which will lead to the final goal, a method of immunisation.

One is struck again by the vastness of the world yet to be conquered by scientists in Africa, and by the discrepancy between the task and the forces. There are perhaps fifteen million head of cattle in East Africa and there could be twice or thrice this number if diseases were con-

<sup>1</sup>Stipophane and Phenanthridinum, also called 897 and 1553.

## TRAINING OF EX-SOLDIERS

quered and—even more important—if proper methods of husbandry were used. Yet at these labs, the centre of research and scientific training for all eastern Africa, there is a full staff of six researchers, of whom one or two are generally on leave. In the headquarters of the Board of Agriculture in Nairobi—and this is for Kenya alone—you can without difficulty discover twice that number of hard-working men, with better prospects and pay, administering and drawing up memoranda. Even the man who chops up a dead cow and sells it makes far more money than the expensively trained individual who probes into the complexities that lie behind its very existence. Along so many highways, the cart rattles briskly forward before the hungry horse.

From these three territories together, about 180,000 young Africans passed through the ranks of the Army in the war, all volunteers. Some fought in Burma, and fought well, but most saw no action; they guarded stores in the Middle East and in North Africa (a few were taken at Tobruk), they trained and manned lines of communication in India and Ceylon, they garrisoned cities and outposts.

Coming, as many did, from the material poverty and age-old discipline of tribalism, these non-fighters found themselves in a world as remote from their own as Aladdin's cave from a winter's afternoon in Peckham: a world of fantastic wealth, abundance and comfort. They were provided with gargantuan meals, with clothes richer than a chief's apparel, with ample leisure, new and strange recreations, pocket-money in unimagined quantities and a discipline far milder than that of their own custom. It was to be expected that, when they returned, not to 'civvy street' but to 'civvy shamba', the downward plunge of all their living standards, the narrowing of opportunity, would bring discontent and feelings of frustration.

Aside from this, there was the question of whether the skills imparted by Army instructors at such heavy cost were to be wasted. The raw land of Africa needs the creative hand of the craftsman; and here, it seemed, was a sudden windfall of thousands of semi-trained men.

And so 'Centre B' came into being: a school where ex-soldiers partially trained in various trades undergo an intensive course to fit them for civilian jobs.

In big open-sided sheds, carpenters busily mortice joists and fashion nicely-finished tables; blacksmiths pound and coax their metals into ploughshares, pliers and door-hinges; sign-writers neatly letter their shingles: 'Karioki—Highclass Shoemaker', 'United Africa Hotel';



## KENYA

would-be mechanics seated on benches chant after an African instructor the mystic words 'magneto', 'piston ring', 'armature' as he holds up each part for inspection. Welders in masks make the sparks fly with oxy-acetylene torches. The tailors have landed a contract for 26,000 Government uniforms, the electricians have wired extensions to the European boys' school, the cobblers make hand-sewn shoes better than anything to be bought in Nairobi shops. A heartening impression of bustle and keenness emanates from these crowded workshops. The men work a full seven-and-a-half hour day and no shirkers are tolerated.

This healthy and unusual spirit probably springs from no single cause. Every man knows that if he is thrown out a dozen are waiting to replace him. A big carrot dangles in front of each nose: the prospects of a well-paid job and the prestige of a *fund*.

Nutritionists might point out that the men are very well fed. (All this is free, and the trainee is paid 60/- a month as well, about four times the ordinary farm wage.) Believers in discipline can cite close supervision. For rather less than 400 men in training there are 13 British technical instructors and 36 Africans—that is, about one instructor to every eight men. And the centre is commanded by a former Warrant Officer of the Royal Navy acclaimed by all as a round peg in a round hole: a man experienced also in welfare work and education in London, with human sympathies allied to the conviction that people must work for their own salvation rather than look for it as a gift.

"We've turned out about eight hundred men," he said. "Semi-trained—we don't expect to train complete mechanics or electricians in eight months. And we've only had three complaints about the quality of their work. Their reliability is another matter. Well, you can't teach people such things as punctuality, a sense of responsibility and pride in work in eight months. We do what we can."

Have they not learnt such virtues in the Army? Alas, an almost universal scepticism prevails about the Army's claims to have imparted either manual skill or civic virtue. It is true that Africans were taught such skilled jobs as wireless telegraphy, and to handle complicated weapons, but one hears on all sides that while they may have learnt to perform a few routine operations under supervision, they did not learn to use their heads or to cultivate ingenuity.

These deficiencies have been so far made good that there is a waiting list of jobs for those who complete the course and go forth with their box of tools. Their starting pay is 80/- a month—half as much again as that of the lowest grade teacher and at least five times that of a labourer

## AFRICAN TRADESMEN

—which soon goes up to 100/- or over. For the first time in local history Africans will offer serious competition to Indians, who have hitherto held, and still hold, a near-monopoly of the skilled trades.

“Our first idea was that these men would go back to their reserves and start up on their own as tailors, cobblers, cycle repairers and what-have-you—village craftsmen, in fact. But the great majority prefer paid employment. The wages are too tempting. Perhaps at the present stage that’s really the best plan, because most of them lack the business ability and the self-discipline, one might say, to run their own show. Some of them have the sound idea of getting more experience in paid employment and saving money to start on their own.”

All the instructors—among “the best craftsmen Britain can produce”, as their director said—agree that their pupils are quick to learn. An elderly tinsmith, watching one of his lads, observed:

“It took me twelve years to learn how to do that job. I had to find out for myself. I taught *him* in a morning.”

Centre B occupies the site of the Native Industrial Training Depot, started as long ago as 1924 to turn out an annual trickle of carpenters and masons. In a country so lacking in the material equipment of life—where men and women sleep on skins because they cannot make beds, live in hovels lacking doors and windows because they cannot build houses, go barefoot because they are ignorant of shoe-making and bend their backs under the heaviest load because they have no notion of the wheelwright’s craft—it seems strange that 1,000 schools should have been set up where the young might learn to read and write but only this one, turning out less than a score a year, where they could study those simple crafts which in Europe enabled the people to build for themselves a standard of material culture, based on the notion of careful work honestly performed, infinitely higher than anything to be found in Africa, long before the rise of general literacy.

Meanwhile, Centre B is a fine attempt to give a good chance to ex-soldiers. Here, you feel, is a partnership not talked about in speeches but working in practice, based on shared tasks and the pursuit of a common end. Africans here respect the white man because he knows what they wish to learn and has taken off his coat to show them, Europeans respect the African because he is honestly trying to learn and, what is more, as a rule succeeding. Centre B has the feel of a ‘happy ship’.

“Trouble?” said the commander. “We’ve had very little, except at the start. Working with the men all day, we soon know if they’ve got

## KENYA

anything on their minds. At first we encouraged them to set up a committee and we had no end of *fatina*—complaints, indignation meetings, unpleasantnesses all round. They just sat on their bottoms thinking up grievances. We abolished the committee and we've had no trouble since."

On this undemocratic note we left Centre B for Centre C a few miles off, where some 270 ex-soldiers are in training for 'white collar jobs' instead of manual skills. And here, instead of no committees, there seem to be dozens.

"People came out of the Army in a difficult mood," said the principal, who himself served in the Education Corps. "They reacted against discipline and were full of suspicion about their treatment here. Most of them had been clerks, education instructors and so on; I don't think any were fighting troops. They came to me and demanded to be 'given' this and that—football, literary societies, debates and so on. I told them to start committees and organise their own out-of-class activities, and they did.

"These young men are mostly going to become teachers, the rest clerks, traders, agricultural instructors, and so on. At first they were inclined to be abusive and bad-mannered, and some left when they realised the length of the courses here—at least two years, probably three. I think the ones who've stayed are settling down, but they're still disgruntled over pay. Lower primary teachers get only fifty-five shillings, full primary teachers seventy-five shillings—less than the *fundis* from Centre B. That leads to a lot of feeling."

Such meagre pay seems to condemn the teacher to penury for life. Yet to raise the salaries of Kenya's 4,800 African teachers would merely mean that—since money does not grow on trees—fewer could be employed, or at any rate no more could be recruited, and fewer children than ever would get any schooling.

Major Mason's hardest task has been to create from nothing the beginnings of an *esprit de corps*. As an aid to this, he awards a blazer to men who have given time and energy to societies or clubs—as he puts it, for 'acts of social consciousness'.

The idea of service to the community is by no means new in Africa, but it is new to these brash young individualists in its modern guises. (One of the most influential Kenya Africans, educated in England, opposed the fostering of co-operative societies as 'an attempt to keep the African in the herd; the European and the Asian was usually an individualist, and the African wished to be an individualist too'.<sup>1</sup>)

<sup>1</sup>Quoted from the 1946 report of the Registrar of Co-operative Societies.

## REWARDS FOR 'SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS'

Always it is suspected, at first, as a ruling-race device to get people to do something for nothing. Yet the notion of prestige is so deeply and universally rooted that these budding teachers will at heart respect a blazer won for 'social consciousness' as devoutly as their fathers honoured the symbols of chief and rain-maker, or as their English contemporaries revere, as the case may be, an international cap or a bust of Stalin.

Although of the up-and-coming and spiritually proud intelligentsia, they do not by any means throw overboard all the customs of their elders. Last week their debating society divided on the perennial question of the bride-price. A majority of 47 to 40 voted in favour of retaining it, as a factor making for the stability of marriage.

The first 22 young men trained for a new kind of job went out a month ago and are now at work for Local Native Councils. These are social welfare officers, whose task will be to direct mass literacy campaigns and tend such good works as boy scout troops, football matches, information rooms and lectures. They have been taught all the right things about uplift and community spirit, and certainly a little brightness on the fun-and-games level is badly needed; they will do good; but now and then one is tempted to wonder whether all this somewhat nebulous and even dreary 'welfare' would not become more carefree and effective were it to be pried from its bureaucratic wrappings and handed over to Mr. Butlin.

Here, as at Centre B, one feels a breeze of enthusiasm, but the task is more complex and less defined than the initiation of craftsmen, the percentage of failures higher. Nevertheless this is the most serious and complete effort being made in East Africa to offer to young men fired by new ideas in the Army a chance to become useful and 'socially conscious' citizens, and especially teachers, of whom there is so dire a need.

Mr. Cary Francis, a talented mathematician, has been for 15 years headmaster of the Alliance High School. He has sunk there so strong a foundation of thorough study that he gets a higher proportion of his boys through the Makerere entrance exam than any other East African headmaster.

Makerere is the lodestar of all his pupils. Few reach it. Over three-quarters fall at the half-way hurdle, or drop out of their own accord. The survivors sit for School Certificate in their last term and immediately afterwards for the Makerere entrance. Only two or three boys from the Roman Catholic secondary school, an opposite number

## KENYA

to this Protestant Alliance, as a rule make the grade, and these two schools between them at present supply the whole of Kenya's Makerere entry.<sup>1</sup> Two new secondary schools are in the forefront of the development plan.

Only one child in about 2,000, in the Colony as a whole, has a chance of passing School Certificate. Yet every year more schools are being opened, or present schools enlarged.

"It's not only a question of many children having no chance of elementary schooling, though of course that contributes," said one of the masters. "The proportion mentally able to reach School Certificate standard is very small. Heredity? Poor teaching at lower levels? Illiterate homes? Poor health and nutrition? Probably a combination of all these things. They're learning, after all, in a foreign tongue. And you must remember that even to-day, after nearly a century of universal education, less than ten per cent of English children reach a secondary school."<sup>2</sup>

That is the sort of fact that many Africans, avid for more secondary teaching, receive with polite but unbelieving smiles.

There are three girls at the Alliance, out of an enrolment of about 170. One has just passed into Makerere, the first Kenya girl to do so in full competition with boys. How great is this achievement can be realised only by remembering the centuries of subjection from which she is just emerging, as through a hard crust of ice.

Anthropologists have suggested that this notion of the subjection of women has been overdone. Women have their rights, they say, and insist on getting them, and are no dumb chattels. This indeed is so: yet any day, in these environs of Nairobi, you may see a sight that to my mind correctly expresses the status of most African women: a man, unencumbered, walking lightly along the path swinging a cane while his wife plods on behind, bent almost horizontal under a heavy load suspended by a leather strap that bites a furrow into her forehead. She is silent, he calls out greetings to his friends.

The Alliance High School stands on the crest of one of those fresh green ridges that comprise Kikuyuland. Other ridges roll away in all

<sup>1</sup>As throughout tropical Africa, this is still pitifully small. Of a child population (7-15) of roughly 800,000, about 210,000 (25%) attended, or partially attended, primary schools in 1945, and 400 reached secondary schools. Only 37 passed School Certificate. Numbers are small but quality high—in 1947, out of 20 entrants, the Alliance High School scored 11 firsts and 9 seconds—no failures. These results were much better than those of the Prince of Wales' School.

<sup>2</sup>The actual 1946 figures are: total of children in 15-18 age-group, 2,350,000; total on register of secondary schools, 219,764; percentage of child population (15-18) on school registers, 9.4; total entered for School Certificate, 100,160.

## CIRCUMCISION

directions to a blue horizon; red shambas and red gashes down the hillsides, the dark green of wattle foliage, the brilliant green of bananas, the honey-tinted rounded thatch, the greys and whites and violets of the changing clouds, all go to make a brilliant and a spreading panorama. This is Kikuyu country, fresh, sparkling and packed with humanity; Nairobi and its sophistication, its social halls and evening classes and trade unions, lies but a few miles away; and after harvest youths and maidens curiously garbed in beads and feathers and old newspapers, and daubed all over with clay, gather still for the dances marking the ceremony of circumcision.

Although the circumcising of girls has been for years outlawed by Missions, frowned on by Government and generally condemned, it still persists, and certain 'educated men' who might be expected to support its abolition have acclaimed it as a sacred custom which the nihilistic European wishes to stamp out. Others genuinely oppose it, and sometimes the girls themselves revolt and take refuge with Missions. Yet public opinion is often too strong.

A Kikuyu schoolmaster refused to sanction the circumcision of his schoolgirl daughter. One evening, as she was drawing water, a gang of young men carried her off and next day the brutal operation was forcibly performed. Her father resolved to bring a case before the Native Tribunal; what threats were uttered and what witchcraft practised remains unknown, but he dropped the case and the abductors went unmolested. As for the girl, it was six months before she was physically recovered, and such a mental injury might leave its mark for life. Teachers and doctors suggest that much of the backwardness of women may be traced to this cause.

Customs die hard—even milder ones, such as that which forbids an unmarried girl to speak directly to a grown man. Good manners require that when addressed she should simper, put her hand over her mouth and perhaps say coyly: "I don't know".

"That's why girls get neglected," said one of the Alliance masters. "They hang back, the boys are ready with an answer and the teacher can't for ever keep on trying to overcome feminine shyness." This is perhaps the strongest argument against co-education.

Going round the classes in the dull but adequate stone buildings you find yourself seeing School Certificate as a kind of straight-jacket into which all these industrious young Africans, so eager for knowledge as for a sort of magic, are being strapped.

The syllabus and methods followed with such dubious success in our European industrial island have simply been exported like a bale of

## KENYA

cloth from Manchester. No one, it appears, has paused to ask whether the subjects taught—and the way of teaching them—to children of factory workers in an ancient European city will best serve the children of African peasants in a raw land without history. And so these youths, destined perhaps to spend their lives instructing or doctoring peasants and the children of peasants on the edge of the Orient, must sit for an examination identical with that inflicted on the youth of Wigan, and need learn little of the life and land from which their families and their country draw sustenance save to despise them.

Entering a class, it was startling to see a group of sturdy, cleanly-dressed lads playing in their stilted careful English the parts of ladies of fashion of eighteenth century Bath.

Njeroge: Madam, I must tell you plainly, that had I no preference for anyone else, the choice you have made would be my aversion.

Kamau: What business have you, miss, with *preference* and *aversion*? They don't become a young woman; you ought to know that as both always wear off 'tis safest in matrimony to begin with a little *aversion*. I am sure I hated your poor dear uncle before marriage as if he'd been a blackamoor—and yet, miss, you are sensible what a wife I made!—and when it pleased Heaven to release me from him, 'tis unknown what tears I shed! But suppose we were going to give you another choice, would you give up this Beverly?

Njeroge: Could I belie my thoughts so far as to give that promise, my actions would certainly as far belie my words.

Kamau: Take yourself to your room! You are fit company for nothing but your own ill-humours.

Njeroge: Willingly, ma'am; I cannot change for the worse.

Karioki: It is not to be wondered at, ma'am—all this is the natural consequence of teaching girls to read. Had I a thousand daughters, by Heaven! I'd as soon have them taught the black art as their alphabet!

The ghost of Sheridan, one hopes, would be gratified, if perhaps amazed.

## NAIROBI

Dr. Nathoo called for me in a de luxe Lincoln, new and gleaming. His house is so clean and tidy that one feels nervous of leaving a footprint in the hall or a shower of dust on the sofa. It is furnished in a rigid and correct European style; the men are spick and span; wisely, the women cling to their soft becoming saris wrapped in misty folds

## TEA WITH DR. NATHOO

round their beautiful and supple figures and chosen with skill to show off their smooth, creamy complexion and full dark eyes. We sat a little stiffly in the Nathoos' parlour, drinking tea and eating delicious sambusas.

My host is a Muslim: small, dapper, eager, quick, intelligent, with those radiant and attentive manners that make most Europeans seem by comparison cold and callow. His friends are professional men: doctors, teachers, lawyers. All speak English more fluently than many Englishmen, and most have rounded off their training in England. Dr. Nathoo studied dentistry in London, one of the doctors practised in Glasgow for ten years.

These Nairobi Indians are the rich and privileged, a world away from the duka-owner living in squalor on fractions of cents squeezed from hard bargains with Africans, or the bearded Sikh carpenter tinkering away at a farm shed. Yet Indians of all levels are—so my hosts assured me—a great deal better off materially in Kenya and Uganda than in their own distressed sub-continent.

"And not only materially," added Dr. Nathoo. "In India eighty-five per cent are illiterate; in Kenya there is hardly any illiteracy at all." (The big Government Indian school here in Nairobi is packed to bursting point.)

"We are all more prosperous," agreed one of his colleagues. "At home, people sit on the floor of a crowded room and wonder if they will get enough to eat. They are used to nothing; here, as soon as they start to do well in business, they must have chairs and tables, smart clothes, a boy, an ayah, gin and whisky, a bicycle, even a car."

How often one has heard the same half-plaintive criticisms made by Englishmen of Englishmen—no-account frogs from a big lake lording it over a small colonial pond! Evidently like circumstances act in the same way on unlike races.

"I could name thirty families living in this part of Nairobi," said my host, "who spend a hundred to a hundred and fifty pounds a month merely on living—on food, drink and boys' wages." One has only to see the procession of costly Indian-driven cars bowling down River Road after the closing of shops and offices to be confirmed in his opinion.

All this seems to lend substance to European accusations of tax-dodging. Only about one-tenth of the income tax is paid by Asians, who certainly make more than one-tenth of the money.

One of the guests shrugged his shoulders.



## KENYA

"Many European businesses are selling out to Indians. I myself am sorry to see this, but it is true. You must remember that most Indian businesses are shared between many families, and that Indians have a lot of children."

This is indeed true. Before the war the Indian population was officially held to number about 40,000. When rationing of sugar was introduced, over 78,000 applied for registration. If those figures are correct, as appears likely, the Indians have doubled themselves in 16 years. (The European population is under 30,000.)

The proportion of Muslim to Hindu is roughly the same as in the home sub-continent, about one to three. And the same distrust divides them, though its edge is softened here.

"We demand a common roll with Europeans," said a Hindu ex-Legislative Councillor, voicing the Indians' political objectives. "All should vote equally on one democratic roll for members of Legislative Council. In order to meet the European's fear of swamping, we have offered to concede that half the seats should be held by Europeans."

One of the Muslims quickly intervened.

"We do not agree with the common roll at all! On the contrary, we support a communal roll and wish to see it extended, so that Muslims and Hindus vote on separate rolls, as in India. We Muslims have been consistently swamped by the Hindus!"

So, in Kenya politics, wheels revolve within wheels.

Both sides agreed that, prosperous as they are materially, Indians here miss the inspiration of their own culture.

"We in East Africa have made no cultural contribution whatever," said Dr. Nathoo; and a woman added:

"I wish that our children were taught more of Indian dancing and art. They grow up ignorant of their own heritage. I enjoyed most on my visit—I had never been to India before—the opportunity to hear for the first time good Indian music, and to see some Indian art. Here there is nothing like that."

Indeed you may wonder how these richer women fill their days. Cooking and housework is performed by houseboys; ayahs can be seen walking out the little pig-tailed girls and crop-haired olive-tinted boys; so far as I know their mothers seldom take refuge in the European time-killers of bridge, novel-reading, tennis and sitting on committees. Perhaps they entertain each other a great deal. Certainly they look magnificent, they speak English in softly modulated voices, they move with the sensuous grace of grasses in the wind. Beside them,

## FASHIONS IN SARIS

one feels as awkward as a thistle in a bed of carnations. Their hands are as smooth as petals and unstained by work. In Nairobi the Muslim women do not keep the veil.

In the room hung an interesting crayon of a group of Masai women, a large picture taking up most of the wall.

"It is the work of a Frenchwoman married to the Italian consul. Several years ago I offered it to the Arts and Crafts Society for their annual show. They wrote back to say they couldn't accept it because it was the property of an Indian."

This was a social occasion and racial feeling was politely buried, but under the surface one could feel it bubbling like a hidden spring.

"A great many Europeans have accepted my hospitality," said Dr. Nathoo, speaking with resignation, "but only one has ever asked me into his house. And that only happened once. He told me that he had been ostracised by his European friends for doing so."

If such behaviour seems childish, at its most charitable assessment, one should note in fairness that, as thrust provokes riposte, the dottiness is not all on one side. I have seen a whole page of the *Colonial Times* (the most popular and excitable of the Indian papers) taken up with a long and heavily sarcastic complaint that an Indian on a mixed committee received a letter addressed to 'Mr.' instead of to 'Esq.'

At the end of the evening my hostess took me aside for a cosy chat about clothes. Her wardrobe was piled high with sari after sari, some made in England, some of the lovely fine-spun cloth of Kashmir; saris spangled, saris embroidered, saris of the finest lawn and the lightest chiffon, saris of misty blue and claret red, of purest white and palest violet, saris of every possible colour. One could only reflect with resignation on the empty crumpled ration book and utility art silk.

As we left, a venerable old gentleman in a black cap and long white beard, in the baggy trousers and dark alpaca coat of an older generation, stood benignly in the hall.

"My father," said Dr. Nathoo. "He is eighty years old. He came here from India in eighteen ninety-eight. He speaks no English."

And I no Hindustani. It was a pity; he could have told an interesting tale. Nairobi then was little more than a swamp bisected by a muddy track flanked by a few dukas run up out of old debbis by pioneers from Bombay. Now the old man inhabits this luxurious modern bungalow, waited on by white-gowned houseboys, and sees his sons among East Africa's most prosperous and respected leaders and business men. It is not only Europeans who seek fortunes in the Colonies, and it seems more often to be Indians who find them.

## *Part Two*

# TANGANYIKA

### MOSHI

In all Africa there can scarcely be a lusher, greener spot than the slopes of this enormous mountain. In every untended corner, plant life wells up like a green fountain; lofty forest trees mingle with exotic wattle; crops spring with vigour from the moist earth; even from the faces of precipices, ferns and creepers peer. A deep, rich, volcanic soil, a lavish rainfall, snows and glaciers that feed clear stone-hopping streams, a genial sun to warm the soil—Kilimanjaro has everything. Narrow earth roads wind among deep gorges, and over the tree-tops you glimpse the huge plain below stretching away to the purple-furrowed hills of Paré, the white-rimmed lake of Jipé, and the far blue horizon.

This belt of land has also some of the most advanced and energetic people in East Africa, the Wa-Chagga. Years ago, like sister tribes to the northwards, they sheltered from marauding Masai in the forest. High up, to-day, we passed broken stone walls, now half-enclosing a little school, that had been built as a stockade.

Some of the buffer land then uncultivated, lying roughly in a broad belt round half the mountain, was sold or ceded by Chagga chiefs to the Germans. British conquests in 1914-18 ended in the expulsion of the settlers, whose properties were sold for a song to Indians and Greeks. After an interval, the Germans came back. And 15 years later, for a second time, they were dispossessed, and their farms taken over by the Custodian of Enemy Property to be leased out, again, mainly to Greeks.

The Wa-Chagga are nervous about the Germans once more coming back. They want these farms themselves. Increasing rapidly, they are seeping down to the plain below the belt of 'alienated' land. We passed many girls and women plodding up the road with loads of grass cut from the lower foothills. Land on the mountain cannot be spared for grazing and the cattle live all their lives in their owners' dark huts, or in little byres, stall-fed. They are almost blind, like pit-ponies, and have long claw-like hoofs.

We paid a morning call on Chief Petro Hosi Maridi, who received

## NATIVE COFFEE GROWING

us in a white house newly bought, together with a farm of 450 acres, from a Greek, at a cost of £9,000 raised by the Chagga Native Treasury. Below lay a big stretch of cultivation dotted with sticks to mark the limits of small plots into which the chief has divided the farm on lease to his land-hungry people.

"The land which the Germans took should be given back to us, not sold," he said. "It is ours; why should we pay?"

Chief Petro is a youngish man: quiet, soft-spoken, slight in build, dressed like a business-man in a quiet grey check tweed. With him was a retinue of clerical retainers, all paid by the Native Treasury from a tax of 9/- levied on the head of every family. Chiefs' salaries are low—about £180 a year here at the top of the scale—but one does not hear of poor chiefs. Indeed, one is tempted to believe that no Chagga are poor.

About 20 years ago a District Commissioner called Charles Dundas decided that Kilimanjaro could prosper on coffee. Disliking the notion of wasting good crop land under an exacting and inedible bush, the Chagga at first resisted; but he was a persistent man and plenty of coffee was, in due course, planted. For a while the people grumbled, but when the European planters showed their disapproval, the Chagga began to feel that there must be something in the idea. Many worked on plantations, and these men returned to their homes impressed by European riches, which they attributed to coffee, and acquainted with the rudiments of its cultivation. Coffee growing began to catch on. To-day there is scarcely a small-holder on the mountain without his little plot, perhaps half an acre or perhaps 20, and the name of Dundas is so deeply revered that he is almost a demigod.

All this has made the Chagga rich, by African standards. Growers make anything from £10 to £300 a year from their crops. Chief Petro, for instance, has nine acres, so he told us, bringing him in £200 a year, out of which he must pay his labour.

Until a year ago this industrious, close-packed tribe was ruled by twenty different chiefs, some good, some bad, and all presiding over units too small for modern usage. (The humblest chief had only 300 subjects.) The machinery, unchanged for a quarter of a century, creaked, delays were endless, cases of petty extortion and tyranny common. Now all these sectional chiefs—who, unlike their opposite numbers in Kenya, had no elected councils to restrain them—have been grouped together under three big chiefs, and the three big chiefdoms linked in a federal council for the whole tribe.

## TANGANYIKA

This is a form of stream-lining, for reasons of efficiency. A much deeper change is a first sowing of the seeds of a new and formal kind of democracy. (Nearly all African tribes by tradition practise an informal, give-and-take kind.) Hitherto the hereditary chief has been absolute cock of his roost: hedged in, it is true, by the British administration on the one side and native tradition on the other, but pretty free to crow his own tune, and perhaps to feather his own nest in-between-whiles.

Now, in each of the three divisions, a council has been set up with the chief as chairman. On it, men representing the peasants outnumber the sub-chiefs, and some have been chosen by 'the man on the shamba'. This marks the first introduction into Tanganyika of the electoral principle, which has been operating quite well in Kenya for about 20 years.

"The councils are good. It is right that the people should be heard," said Chief Petro approvingly; and the D.C. added: "So far, it's going well. Not that everything is roses in the garden, of course. There's still a good deal of soreness over the amalgamation of chiefdoms and the consequent demotion of seventeen chiefs. And the idea of 'the best man for the job', as opposed to the hereditary principle, is a brand-new one. It will probably take years to get it across. But given time, we shall manage it."

The treasurer of the Chagga Council—which is the real power-to-be on the mountain—gave us morning tea; or rather his wife did, presiding with quiet aplomb over the teacups in her spotless, doily-covered parlour, attended by twin girls with eyes like saucers. Their house is a show-piece in the neighbourhood. Built in European style, it cost £1,250, a sum left to Joseph, he told us, by his grandfather, who had made it out of coffee and cattle, with the stipulation that the whole legacy should be spent on a house that would do honour to his name and ensure the eminence of his seed. So here it nestles among the floppy-leaved bananas and its owner's coffee trees with an air of solid prosperity and of setting an example to the neighbours, who remain as they have always been.

Joseph is a rare bird even among the clever and ambitious Chagga. From their 200,000, only four have passed through Makerere and returned to work among their own people. The Chagga are avid for education and wish to spend all their money on it, but if cash were to be found to-morrow to build a dozen secondary schools, they would stand empty for lack of staff.

The road back wound through tongues of forest green as *crème-de-*

## LEGENDS OF KILIMANJARO

menthe, with tree-ferns springing out of moss-lined branches; it doubled over small clear streams cascading down from hidden glaciers. A generous and smiling landscape, breathing fecundity. Imposing Mission stations, now Catholic, now Lutheran, appeared at intervals out of the vegetation, standing, like the monasteries of southern Europe, on commanding promontories, and providing for the Chagga a network of elementary schools.

Moshi lies at the mountain's foot. We got back to lunch with a hospitable D.O. whose sitting-room was festooned with oars. (He twice stroked Cambridge to victory.) He talked of Kilimanjaro's staunchest pilgrim, a Russian missionary, once a Don Cossack, who has reached the summit—the peak of Kibo—49 times. It is sad that he was baffled by an avalanche in his attempt to achieve the half-century before his retirement.

To this elderly little priest 'his' mountain is a dedication, and he has collected many legends about it. One such is that the son of the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon, the first Menelik, journeyed up the slopes on his way back from his father's mines at Sofala and, dying there, was buried under the snow with all his treasure. Even now, it is said, a belief lingers among Abyssinians that a new king of kings will one day travel south to conquer and restore the lost dominions, and will find the signet ring of the first Menelik in a cave on the white Kibo.

Kilimanjaro, 'the shining mountain', was once a volcano; it may become so again. The Chagga say that old Kibo lent his pipe to a lesser mountain down Arusha way, and that one day he will call for it back again.

Once, climbing by night, this Russian mountain-fanatic persuaded his companions to wear their sun-helmets for fear of moonstroke—"because we approach now so very close to the moon."

## LYAMUNGU

Coffee bushes, dark green and glossy-leaved, are starred with little creamy buds just unfolding; their orange-blossom scent flavours the air. Huge forest trees with boles the colour of silver birches shade grassy paths, a clear stream rushes down from tumbled hills.

The work here is as well-planned and significant as any that is going on in East Africa. It started back in 1933 when Agricultural Officers noticed that coffee bushes varied enormously in their yields. Following this up with tests, they found that roughly 30 per cent of the bushes gave 70 per cent of the crop. It appears that coffee trees,

## TANGANYIKA

like humans, number amongst them the strong and the weak, the fecund and the infertile, and that these qualities are inherited.

From all the trees on the mountain they selected 16,000, and every year they gathered and weighed the crop off each of these individuals. Some, they found, yielded at the rate of a couple of bags to the acre, others seven or eight times as much. Taking 150 of the most fecund bushes as 'mother trees' they took cuttings—and this involved a separate and most difficult set of experiments—and propagated them. Those cuttings have now become trees, and a second generation of cuttings is being taken. I saw thousands and thousands of these in cold frames, each one the progeny of a particular tree whose performance is as carefully watched and studied as that of a champion dairy cow.

The vegetable descendants of a single tree are called the clones of that tree, and, being genetically identical, they must, given exactly similar conditions, behave in exactly the same way. Now experiments are going on to find out how each clone responds to different kinds of treatment—irrigation, mulching, fertilising and so on.

The average yield of Kilimanjaro coffee is about three hundred-weights to the acre. The best of the selected clones yield, in exactly the same conditions, 15 or 16 hundredweights. One day all the trees on the mountain may be the progeny of a dozen selected 'mother trees' and yields from the same acreage may be five or six times higher. For it is intended to replace every one of the 12,000,000 trees in this region with new and better trees taken from the most successful clones.

Chagga economy thus stands poised on the verge of great advances, though these will take at least 20 years to mature. Thanks to the patient work of a few scientists, nearly a quarter of a million Africans may treble, or more, their material prosperity. These scientists—university-trained Agricultural Officers of the Colonial Service—will get no more out of it than their tiny 'annual increment', bringing them, if they stay the pace, after 25 years' service to the princely sum of £920 a year. The man in charge at Lyamungu limped with an effort up the steep hills, his leg stiff from a permanent and worsening injury sustained while on duty, and for which not a cent of compensation has been paid. Who, here, is exploited—African or Englishman?

Dusk fell while we lingered among the replicated plots, the darkening air sweet with the scent of blossom, the plain far below turning from plum to indigo. As we drove back by moonlight, Kibo emerged, its even blanket of snow as smooth as icing sugar, its flat crest floating in the dark-blue vault as lightly as an albatross. Little wonder that to

## THE KILIMANJARO NATIVE CO-OP. UNION

the ant-like humans on its flanks it speaks of the eternal and mysterious—the core of their legends, the haunt of spirits, the throne of God.

### MOSHI

Imposing new offices are going up to house the Kilimanjaro Native Co-operative Union, East Africa's most successful co-op, run entirely by Africans except for Mr. Bennett, who was for fifteen years its genius and organiser and has now retired into the background—though by no means out of sight—as its adviser.

It is a union of 27 separate societies of growers, each of which, on its members' behalf, collects and markets their crop, buys in bulk their supplies, handles finance and watches over their interests. It has about 29,000 members and last year sold just under 4,000 tons of parchment coffee, valued at over £300,000.

The seeds of this remarkable body germinated among the Chagga themselves, but it was trained in the right direction by Mr. Bennett, who has won a position of trust and even affection among a generally suspicious and often anti-European people. It was started in 1925, largely as a response to European planters' opposition to native coffee growing based on the fear that badly managed native shambas would harbour some of the bugs and pests that delight in fastening on the species *arabica*, and that have been known to wipe out trees over whole regions and even whole countries, as happened in Ceylon.

The first object of the Kilimanjaro Native Planters' Association (as it started life) was therefore to buy chemicals and sprays for communal use in order to guard against this contingency. And the native growers hit back. Whenever Europeans accused Africans of having dirty shambas, the native growers complained about ill-kept European estates. This racial competition naturally led to ill-feeling, but also impressed on the Chagga the need to follow European methods of coffee culture. An official report remarked: "There is no doubt that the criticisms to which the native coffee-grower has been subject have given an impetus to the industry and have assisted in raising the standard of coffee culture."

In spite of this fortunate bias more or less forced on the young association, things were not all plain sailing. A good deal of the coffee began to suffer, as Europeans had prophesied, from faulty or slack methods of upkeep. Financial difficulties forced a re-organisation into the Kilimanjaro Native Co-operative Union, at first put under Government supervision and run by a European.

And then political troubles arose. Rules to control cultivation—



## TANGANYIKA

obliging growers to spray their shambas, for instance, and ordering them to uproot diseased trees—had to be enforced by chiefs, and membership of co-operative societies was made compulsory. There was discontent, for the Chagga are a prickly, contentious folk. This was aggravated by low prices during the slump and visited on the chiefs, who were in turn jealous of the rise to power of an octopus-like rival authority.

A fine old internal dog-fight resulted, of the kind that adds spice to life for people of an argumentative, intriguing, ambitious nature like Chagga and Kikuyu (and they seem to have much in common, just as their countries have). It culminated in riots and the burning down of the K.N.C.U. buildings. A group of Chagga malcontents, egged on by Indian lawyers, brought a lawsuit against the Union. They lost their case. A lengthy judgment in 1942 examined in detail the set-up of the Union and gave it a clean bill of health. This upholding of its prestige, combined with high prices, put an end to the trouble, for the time being at least.

Now the Moshi Native Coffee Board has come into being—‘an umbrella to keep odium off the Native Authorities’. The odium of compulsion, that is. To some extent the Board’s formation is a way of giving more power to the central Government, less to the growers. When there is unpopular work to be done—the ‘sanitation of shambas’ for instance, perhaps involving orders for the uprooting of trees—the Board will do it, leaving the co-op to concentrate on marketing, and the chiefs free of blame.

This Board has six members, three African and three European; Mr. Bennett is the executive officer. His reputation, coupled with a 50 per cent representation, appears to reassure the Chagga that the Board’s intentions are honourable.

Its true purpose is not so much to police coffee cultivation as to invigorate it. The replacement of old trees with Lyamungu’s prize clones will be its twenty-year stint. This will be combined with propaganda in favour of better cultural methods (multiple stem pruning, for instance). And buildings for the first school of coffee-growing for Africans are going up now, paid for in part by a tax imposed by the new Chagga Council of eight cents a pound on all coffee grown on the mountain. The Board will then select peasant growers thought most likely to benefit from a two-year course at the school, where they will live in cottages, feed at a central canteen and attend lectures given by experts at nearby Lyamungu. This is something new in adult education, and something from which great things are expected.

## REASONS FOR CHAGGA SUCCESS

The rise of a new star, the Moshi Native Coffee Board, may perhaps dim the lustre of the K.N.C.U., but this new kind of large-scale development is beyond the scope of a co-op. There is still plenty for the Union to do. Its Moshi office, handling thousands of pounds weekly and run by Africans—though Mr. Bennett is still at his desk—is impressive, but its real strength lies in the 27 societies scattered about the mountain-side. These, controlled by elected committees of growers, manage their own affairs, and the committee-men must answer at an annual meeting to the folk who put them in. Each society sends one delegate to another annual meeting which elects a management committee and office-holders for the whole Union. The machinery is simple and democratic; and it works. A great deal of double-checking goes on to avoid peculation, so far with success, and between them the societies make over half a million cash payments every year.

Tempting as it is to do so, one cannot assume that because the Chagga manage co-operation so well every African tribe can do likewise. There are plenty of failures to put against this outstanding success. I asked the chairman of one of the societies how it was that his people, naturally individualistic and indeed quarrelsome, had grasped the idea so much more quickly and clearly than any other. For a few moments he pondered—an elderly, dignified man with strong lines of character marking his face—and then replied in Swahili:

“For three centuries we have lived here on the mountain, and the land has been ours. Many years ago one of our ancestors started to irrigate his shamba with water from a stream. Some of his neighbours followed him, and became furrow-founders. They taught their sons, and sons learnt from their fathers, and for generation after generation the sons of the furrow-founders have cared for their inheritance. But a man cannot irrigate alone. All the men who share a furrow must agree when it is to be opened and closed, and must unite to look after it. In the irrigation season all must give a day’s work without payment to the furrow-founder, and he must satisfy those who come that they are working for the good of everyone.

“It is thus that we have learnt. Why should the Chagga not work for coffee as they have worked for the furrows? This is something that has come to us from our ancestors, it is not new. If the young men and the old will agree, we shall prosper.”

To this I would add a second reason. When you come across a successful venture in Africa, you will nearly always find at the bottom

## TANGANYIKA

of it an individual with an idea who has been left in one place long enough to put it into practice. This seldom happens, because the Government's policy is to move people about like counters on a chequer-board. In this case Mr. Bennett was such a man, and he has had the rare good fortune to be left to pursue his idea in the same place for 15 years.

On the way to Arusha I called on another of the three Chagga super-chiefs, Abdiel Shangali; a large, round-faced, efficient-looking man who sits on the Legislative Council. He has one African colleague, and feels that insufficient; let there be six, he says. Education is the difficulty, he admits.

"Out of six million natives in Tanganyika, perhaps only two hundred are really educated. We have only three secondary schools."

"Why do you think Tanganyika has lagged behind?"

"Because it has changed hands. Kenya and Uganda have been British for fifty years; Tanganyika for only half as long."

Abdiel has been a chief for almost as long as Tanganyika has been British. He has the manner of authority, both inherited and exercised, at once courteous and self-assured. But he feels overworked—deluged by a flood of paper that pours in on him: letters from Africans all over the country reciting grievances, real or imagined; memoranda from the Secretariat, files from his own Native Authority office, copies of resolutions about white papers and new ordinances.

Feeling against Indians, I had been told, runs high on the mountain, and Chief Abdiel did not deny it.

"They take our wealth away. They do not wish us to succeed as traders. And another thing: why should Indians get more money than Africans for the same job? An Indian drives a railway engine; an African with just as good an education drives the same engine; the Indian gets more money. Why?"

We talked also of bride-price, a topic of perennial fascination. In many regions this has reached such heights that young men cannot afford to marry; rich elders get all the girls, and the consequent immorality, disease and discontent is formidable. But among the Chagga, said Abdiel, the cost of a wife has actually fallen.

"Our bride-price is a remembrance," he insisted. "When a girl marries, the bridegroom gives her father a cow. That is a special cow and it is kept in a special place on the right of the entrance. Morning and evening, when they milk the cow, her parents think of their

## A GLIMPSE OF THE MASAI

daughter. And once a year, that father must send his daughter a sheep or a goat; when a child is born, he sends a bullock for a feast." Among his people, according to Abdiel, the bride-price is never paid in money, as it is elsewhere.

Here, too, the population is thought to be increasing by leaps and bounds, aided by the dying out of polygamy. For the truth is—contrary to widespread belief—that, of the two systems, monogamy is the most productive of babies. A polygamous man may have 50 children, but what matters to the net reproduction rate is how many children a woman has, not a man. And there is evidence that a woman produces more babies if she has a husband to herself than if she shares one with half-a-dozen colleagues. The fecundity of our own Victorian grandparents should surely suggest that monogamy can fill the quiver.

Round Abdiel's stone verandae'd office the mountain's rich foothills looked like an unbroken sea of young maize. The road dropped down to cross a tongue of Masai steppe that lies between Kilimanjaro and Mount Meru. Big herds of tiny cattle were to be seen on pastures usually biscuit-coloured but now drenched in the living green of new growth after rain, and once or twice the lone, red, anachronistic figure of a Masai herdsman leaning on his thin spear, his hair plaited with fat and ochre into the traditional peruque, his proud, ancient-Egyptian features so strange a blend of male arrogance and female plasticity.

In this modern African world of blackboards, committees and demagogues, these obstinately conservative nomads, wandering with their enormous herds from pasture to pasture, seem like dinosaurs or pterodactyls, survivors from a past age with a dying set of values—aristocratic, manly, free and doomed. Like everything else in nature that will not or cannot conform to a changed environment, they must perish or merge; only the shield of British administration stands to-day between them and the historical fate of the nomad caught by the relentless and mounting pressure of the teeming cultivator.

## ARUSHA

The whole of the Arusha district, on the southern slopes of Mount Meru, is in the throes of a fantastic local boom, with land changing hands at £60 an acre—undeveloped land.

Some years ago, it is said, a German planted some pawpaw trees, which have umbrella-like tops, to shade his coffee. A visitor from Ceylon, where the production of papain from pawpaw juice is a minor industry, suggested that he might try it as a sideline. In those

## TANGANYIKA

days papain was 4/6 a pound and there was not much profit in it; to-day the price stands at just under 30/-.

Most of the pawpaw farms are ex-German and are now leased by the Custodian of Enemy Property to Greeks. A few are British, and to one of these I was taken by an Irish guide. From the veranda of the low white farmhouse, covered with creepers and set amid green lawns and flower-beds, we saw the iced loaf of Kilimanjaro hovering majestically above the trees. Our host showed us round with a pride and affection no doubt sharpened by a six-years' absence, only recently ended, at the wars; during that time the coffee, the seed beans, the cattle and the pawpaws were managed by his wife, together with two small boys now at school in Kenya; no Crusader's lady could have been less idle.

Pawpaws grow almost as fast as Alice's toadstool. You plant the seedlings in rows, and in ten months you start tapping. It is the clustering green fruit, not the bark, that is lightly slashed with a razor-blade. Out drips the white latex, to fall on to a canvas tray clipped round the trunk. The juice congeals as it falls and lies on the canvas in soft spongy lumps. In a kiln it is dried to a harder consistency; if you touch it, you must immediately wash your hands, or it will burn your skin. The papain is sealed in old petrol tins and there it is, ready to be shipped and sold: surely one of the simplest crops in the world.

"I've been offered twenty-thousand pounds for this farm," our host said. "For three hundred and twenty acres, with sixty acres of pawpaws. Tempted? Not in the least. I've spent twenty years building it up. For the first ten I didn't make enough to keep alive and eked things out with odd jobs. That was after spending three years on coffee farms as a learner, without pay. Then, gradually, things began to pull round. Just as they were straightening out the war came, and for six years I was away. My wife nearly killed herself keeping it going. Now I've bought out my partners and it's mine. Why should I sell? No money on earth would make me."

Those 320 acres are as fertile as any the world could show—deep, rich, black forest loam. A mountain stream rushes down from the Meru forests, turning a water-wheel which generates electricity. Everything grows violently, including weeds. Against them a non-stop battle rages, carried out by labour which has to be recruited several hundred miles away. The mountain tribes, Chagga and Meru, will not work for others.

No sensible man thinks the papain boom will last. So the Arusha district is hay-making while it can. The white spongy latex is so

THE FRUSTRATION OF MR. FRANK ANDERSON  
valuable that armed guards have to be mounted at night over the kilns to prevent theft by gangs organised, it is said, by Indians who operate a black market.

"You put papain into canned meat to make it tender," I was told. (Native cooks have for generations used the dodge of wrapping tough meat in pawpaw leaves.) "You add it to wool to help scour out the grease. It stops nylon stockings from laddering. It prevents beer going flat." In paints and plastics its uses are said to be many and invaluable, and it plays some part in contraceptive manufacture. It is said that an old coastal practice (now evidently abandoned) was to chew pawpaw seeds to keep down fertility.

The rains are on and the earth roads greasy, muddy and bad. In darkness we approached, after shooing a giraffe into the coffee, what appeared by moonlight to be a medieval castle perched on a hilltop and guarded by mastiffs; the atmosphere inside, however, was more homely than baronial. The house was shored up by tree-trunks, for its owners seem haunted by earthquakes; after escaping with their lives, but nothing else, from the Tokio disaster of 1923, a lesser quake found them out on the slopes of Meru and cracked their new solid stone dwelling from stem to stern.

Its rugged, white-haired, fresh-faced Australian owner, political leader of the Tanganyika settlers, talks as if he would like nothing better than to organise a cosmic upheaval of his own to shake the ignorance and complacency of the British public and the mistaken policies of the local Government.

"After twenty years of work and struggle," Frank Anderson said, "I'm afraid I'm an embittered man."

He feels embittered not because of personal failure, or even political frustration, but because he thinks that the home Government has betrayed its own race in Africa. Its leaders have done this, in his view, not merely by setting their faces against the influx of British settlers into Tanganyika, but by doing nothing to aid and much to hinder those already there, and by allowing Indians to gather into their hands the economic power of the territory and foreigners (first Germans, now mainly Greeks) to gain possession of the plantations. For he holds to the belief, now so unfashionable, that the best hope for the future progress of East Africa lies in the creation of a British community with its roots in the soil. Such a community would, in his view (and he can quote such men as David Livingstone to support him) set a better example of work and honesty to the African than bazaar-

## TANGANYIKA

dwelling Indian and fortune-seeking foreigner, and secure by deeper taproots the health and vigour of British rule.

For he does not agree that the policy which is in fact being pursued makes for the ultimate good of the African. Official claims to this effect he puts down as hypocritical or starry-eyed. The ultimate good of the African, he believes, when clouds of wishful and muddled thinking have been brushed aside, can be secured only by hard work, honesty, decent morality and common sense. In this view, the sort of rule that now prevails in Tanganyika has encouraged none of these virtues. On the contrary, in these basic matters he deplors a steady deterioration during the last twenty years. 'Except the Lord build the house, he labours but in vain that builds it', and this particular house he sees as a gimcrack, jerry-built affair—imposing at a distance, shoddy within. That is because, quailing at the formidable task of strong government and shy of moral principles, the rulers have lavished their skill on the cornices and architraves of political formulae and legal niceties, neglecting the foundations of character on which all depends.

Frank Anderson's wife and daughter agree with him. One of their jobs is to run the factory that cleans and grades the seed beans.

"Honesty and courtesy—they go together—have gone steadily downhill. When we first came here, everyone used a special greeting to mark the respect shown to a married woman. Now, it's disappeared; people don't greet each other any more, and the men cheat over their work as they never used to do. They'll do as little work as they can possibly get away with. Twenty years ago, they'd do a day's work for a day's pay. The women are much better. They do all the grading of the beans. They have a pride of work which none of the men have, and they hardly ever try to cheat." Is it a coincidence, they wondered, that women are so much less 'educated' than men?

There is a fairly common idea that the settler's job in Africa is an easy one, consisting mainly of watching others work. This is true only of failures. Most successful farmers, like Frank Anderson, have had a hard struggle. Coming here after the Tokio earthquake, he put his all into coffee, and just as it was coming into bearing, the economic blizzard struck. Coffee fell to £23 a ton, a sum far below the cost of production. The Anderson family supported itself precariously for the next few years by wandering round Tanganyika in a truck taking photographs and selling pictures and articles to the press; and all the while, whenever a large enough cheque arrived, Frank Anderson pushed a little way ahead with his experiments to find a paying crop.

He hit on two: essential oils and vegetable seeds. The oils he dis-

## TREATMENT OF LABOUR

tilled from local plants collected from the bush. The vegetable seeds at first met with much discouragement. He persevered, pestering English seedsmen with samples, until in 1934 he signed his first contract. It was for dwarf French beans, still one of his standbys; to-day he grows seed of 29 varieties of bean, and of many other kinds of vegetable and flower. From nothing he has become, he believes, the largest single seed supplier to the British market and his farm is a show place of the Arusha district.

Seed production, unlike papain, is not money for jam. It is a skilled, tricky sort of business, needing continual care to keep quality at its peak and to defeat diseases. Although his farm is as highly mechanised as possible, labour is his biggest problem. His labour force numbers over 600, mostly brought from several hundred miles away.

"They work an eight-hour day," he said. "And they work hard—almost as hard as a European would. How is it done? Feeding and supervision. I give them all their food, worth three thousand five hundred calories a day—higher than an underground miner in Europe. Their midday meal is cooked for them and taken out to them wherever they are. I have water-boys going round to all the gangs. I weigh all the new recruits, and you wouldn't believe it, but some from the Central Province weigh only seventy pounds. Those same boys, when they leave nine months later, weigh one hundred and sixty pounds. If they get through their first two months, they're all right, and they stay. But forty per cent drop out before the two months are up."

Feeding, he says, while essential, is not everything. "It's quite true that most of them don't want to earn extra by harder work. They'd sooner work shorter hours and keep to their minimum pay. But I *make* them work a full day. If they won't, they go. Discipline and supervision are just as necessary as good food. We run this place as a family concern. They know us and trust us, and I think they know they get a fair deal. Some of them keep coming back to us year after year. Any nonsense and they're fired. But good work gets quick promotion. That's the only way to run a show. All Governments, you'll notice, are run exactly the opposite way."

So all roads lead back to politics.

"It isn't only that the Government's anti-British," our host complained, while a Government official looked on with the tolerant and gratified air of one whose favourite seal is going through his tricks. "They haven't the guts to admit it. They're double-faced."

It would have been honest, he held, to have admitted openly that



## TANGANYIKA

British settlers were not wanted; then at least people would have known where they were. But the Government said more than once that they wanted settlers—'in limited numbers' and 'of the right type'—and then either refused to answer, much less to sanction, their applications for land, or imposed impossible conditions. Economically they needed their work and enterprise but, like a bilker, tried to make use of them without offering a fair deal in return.

He gave as an instance an edict laying it down that no land was to be leased to Europeans that might be needed by Africans in the 'foreseeable future'. Pressed to define the 'foreseeable future', they put it at 33 years, and no lease was allowed to run for longer than this.

No bona fide settler meaning to build up the fertility of the land and to make a permanent home for his family would sink his whole capital in property held on so short a lease and with no guarantee of compensation; but get-rich-quick land-miners would accept such terms, and are doing so. These people, as it so happens mainly Greeks and Indians, do not make the best citizens; meanwhile the young Englishman or Dominion citizen, fresh from the Forces, perhaps, with a fine war record and wishing to build a home and raise a family, is turned away.

The Custodian of Enemy Property is also giving out one-year leases—invitations to tear the heart out of the land. This is happening: a clear example, in Frank Anderson's view, of how a country's good may be sacrificed to the inability of officialdom to make up its mind.

It was gala night in the hotel. Couples fox-trotted round the splintery floor under a frieze of game pictures crudely painted on stained, colourless plaster walls. The blare of a radio racked the corridor and small stuffy bedrooms into the early hours. Brandy flowed, fleshy ladies oozed out of the seams of their cotton prints, curly-haired and liberally pomaded men toasted the still-rising prices of papain. In Arusha German gutturals have given way to Greek polysyllables; but in its single-streeted shady township the ubiquitous Gujarati, then as now, prevails.

Arusha was the home-town of a resourceful African cook trained, so he said, at the Adlon Hotel in Berlin in the days of the Germans. He would cook only for officials, but was not particular about the number he worked for; it eventually transpired that he served four at once. In each kitchen the inevitable small boy held the fort, or the range rather, explaining to prowling mistresses that the cook had just stepped out to visit the market. He was always there on pay-day. The



The Masai at home

Masai warriors playing 'bao'





Giraffes near Namanga

Zebras on the Serengeti



## TWO MASAI CATTLE THIEVES

end came when two of his masters fell out and gave rival dinner-parties on the same evening.

He moved on to Arusha Chine, a big Scandinavian-owned sugar and rice estate. The staff were having a poor run of luck: several deaths and a great deal of sickness. The cook, impressed by Christian ritual, took to dishing up all his creations in the form of a cross: mashed potatoes, fruit flans, salads, even the sliced ham—everything at table was cruciform. He was an excellent cook, but he had to go.

At lunch I met the D.C. currently in charge of Tanganyika's 30,000 Masai, regretting the ruin of his Easter game of golf. At the top of his swing a messenger thrust under his nose a note to say that three prisoners had escaped from the district jail. These men were young *morán*, the warriors, who had made off with some cattle belonging to another clan—a common enough Masai story.

Once apprehended they had owned up, as is the Masai custom—for it is in their code never to lie—and had started to serve a two-years sentence. The High Court, reviewing the case, observed that one of the accused had thrown his club at one of the herders. He had not hurt anyone, but this made the correct charge one of robbery with violence, and not plain cattle theft. The D.C.'s court was not empowered to hear such cases, so the whole thing was wiped out and everyone had to start again. The young Masai were released, re-arrested, and a new inquiry started; all the same questions were asked all over again; at last, bored with so much tomfoolery, they broke out of the lock-up and returned to the comparative sanity of their cattle.

"And when they're tried again, will they get a heavier sentence?"

"Oh, no, probably exactly the same."

Unlike most tribes, the Masai, embedded in their matrix of custom, still resist Western ideas. The young men do not want to be Government clerks and wear trousers. They prefer to herd cattle in a wisp of cloth; the boys have to be forced into school.

As yet, very little headway with education has been made here; in Kenya, several schools have been built and boys and staff found, with difficulty, to fill them. Each boy brings several cows to school, believing that only the milk of his father's herd can nourish him properly; and each brings at least one female relative, sometimes more, to prepare his food.

Starting a Masai school is therefore no light undertaking. You need two or three thousand acres of grazing to begin with, and that involves problems of water supplies. The female relatives quickly

## TANGANYIKA

establish a *manyatta*, that cluster of low, tumulus-like huts made of mud and cow-dung (so low you must enter practically on all fours), pitch-dark and filthy, that surround a central cattle-yard, and are in turn encircled by a thorn fence.

Here the boys live, going daily from these familiar surroundings, with the smell of cows always in their nostrils, and the yard always deep in dung, and the flies settled like a black mask over the faces of babies and toddlers, to a modern brick-and-tile school presided over by a trousered English-speaking master: a Masai also, one of the few 'educated' ones, for no boy would consent to be taught by a man of a tribe he despised—of any other tribe, that is. And these boys, once they have accepted the inevitable, are often extremely bright: more so, according to European teachers, than most of the boys from the education-craving Bantu tribes.

"Some of our chaps," said this D.C., "are getting rather browned-off about Kenya Masai getting all the good jobs—dispensers, N.A. clerks and so on. They're beginning to wonder whether there isn't something in this education racket after all."

It is difficult, perhaps impossible, to 'civilise' tribesmen who remain obstinately nomadic and refuse to covet the material wealth dangled in front of them. If they prefer a skin to a shirt, where is their incentive? To them there is still no beauty, no satisfaction to eclipse a herd of sleek cattle. There is something almost mystical, certainly mysterious, about this intense cow-devotion.

Yet even the Masai are changing slowly and invisibly, for we have taken away the salt of life for the young men. That predatory function for which they had specialised, the raiding of other tribes or clans, has gone; they are to-day as useless as drones, restless, perhaps inwardly damaged. Venereal disease is rife, fertility at a low ebb, and more and more do the men take wives from other and fertile tribes such as the Kikuyu.

Perhaps that is their natural fate—blending, and eventual obliteration. Meanwhile their staunchest defenders are their British administrators. So strong is the appeal to certain natures of their manly, forthright, arrogant bearing, of their physical beauty and courage, and of their free, hard, simple lives—so much more attractive does it seem than our own confused and dubious existence—that officers often fall victim to a complaint known both in the Kenya and Tanganyika administrations as Masai-itis.

"When a D.O. starts to shake," I was told, "then it's high time to move him on." Masai *moran* can work themselves up, by a sort of

## THE SERENGETI LIONS

auto-hypnotism, into an hysterical condition in which they quiver all over. In olden days a posse of *morani* in lion head-dresses and long spears all shaking together as a prelude to battle was said to be a fearsome sight.

"Once there was a D.C. who walked into Arusha in sandals and Masai battle-dress carrying a spear, and went into a shake in the Provincial Commissioner's office."

For fear of Masai-itis, it is unusual nowadays to leave a man in Masai country for more than two or three years.

Arusha stands where plain and mountain meet, just half-way between Cape Town and Cairo. Below stretches the Masai thorn-speckled steppe broken by salt lakes, rugged granite hills and the craters of old volcanoes.

The most famous of these, Ngorongoro, lay too far west for a visit, but I could well recall a former expedition when we had driven over the gully-creased plain—now green, then lion-coloured—to reach the crater's summit. We arrived in darkness, and next morning the sun rose above a grove of fine, tall podocarpus trees that shaded the rest-camp, and poured down into the vast bowl that lay at our feet. At noon the bottom of this crater, 1,500 feet below us, shone in the heat as white and hard as glass. Its floor looked like a toyland panorama: on it lay a steely lake with deeply indented crusty edges, the tops of trees were like pinheads stuck into a cloth drained of all colour. Through field-glasses we could see herds of game scarcely moving—wildebeeste, kongoni, gazelle, and some fat louse-like elephants.

Game at such a distance is dull, its whole charm depends on surprise and intimacy. Next day we started for the Serengeti plains. Now we saw animals at closer quarters: black wildebeeste standing like cattle under the shade of big thorn trees, slender, black-and-tan 'tommy' wagging their perky tails as we passed, and in a scrubby patch perhaps the most graceful of all antelopes, the red impala, with their high swooping horns and easy bounding motion. The country grew steadily hotter, the soil sandier, vegetation more economical. This buff, baked landscape was enlivened occasionally by flashes of colour—the brilliant blue and lilac of a roller, the metallic iridescence of starlings, the soft mother-of-pearl plumage of doves.

That night we camped beside one of those African rivers that degenerate between the rains into a series of rocky pools. Our tents were pitched on the bank of a shallow gully under a big spreading thorn as friendly as an English apple tree, and all around us the famous

## TANGANYIKA

Serengeti lions hunted and sunned themselves on rocks, or waited for tourists to provide a meat dinner.

In those days a famous notice in the game reserve warned people to "try shouting before shooting" if lions got in the way. In fact, shooting was prohibited and the lions were as tame as cats. A big male used to sit every morning about fifty yards from our tents and watch us drink our early morning tea. After a day's prospecting in the lorry, when we seemed to find lions on display under every tree, we shot a zebra and set out on the usual drag-hunt with its carcass tied to the back axle. Our lion was there again that morning, patiently sitting at his post, so we cut off a shoulder and drove up to him. One of the party, leaning out of the lorry, handed him the hunk of meat; gratefully he took it in his mouth and trotted off with it like a dog.

Proceeding slowly through open thorn-scrub, dragging the bait, we had not gone 400 yards before a yellow head peered round a bush. Those quick vaseline-coloured eyes took in the situation; with a flick of the tail, a lioness bounded out and came towards us as if on springs. An extra long leap landed her on the carcass, but we kept moving and it was jerked out of her paws. She bounded along behind us, tearing off hunks of meat.

And then lions seemed to spring out of the ground. In no time at all a dozen were snapping and leaping at the carcass, keeping up a flow of bad language. Finding an open space we cut the rope securing the bait and brought the lorry round to a good angle for photography. More faces appeared from behind bushes: new recruits trotted up eagerly to the meal. Soon seventeen lions were grouped round it, arranging themselves in a perfect fan as if under the direction of a ballet master.

Such were the Serengeti lions in 1938, and I have no doubt they are just as tame to-day. The Serengeti is scheduled to become a national park. This dry, almost waterless country is full of tsetse, too short of rain for cultivation and almost useless to the human race. In it wild animals live in pristine glory as they did before the opening of Africa, save that the edge of their fear of man has been blunted.

Even when lions are half-tame, the sight of them is not. Their flashing movements, the play of muscles under the supple skin, are magnificent. They walk proudly, still the king of beasts. In their yellow flickering eyes, the switching of their black-tipped tails, the slow licking of their lips, above all in their swift pounce and tearing claws, lurks a masked but not obliterated fury. Thus they have been since nature shaped them, thus let us let them be. It seems foolish for

## LAKE DULUTI

men to come so far, as many do, to provoke lions into anger, in order to prove their own courage; bulls in an English pasture are more savage and kill far more people; hunters could just as well, and far more economically, conduct their provocations and exercise their nerve in the nearest farmyard.

On this occasion the car's nose had to be turned in the other direction, back through Moshi to the sea; and I enjoyed en route one of the sights of northern Tanganyika—indeed it could become one of the sights of Africa, were it more accessible and its owner so minded.

Until you reach the stone terrace, you have no idea what to expect; then, without warning, the scene springs into view as at the lifting of a curtain. Down, down below lie the smooth silky waters of a great lake, silver-grey in the sloping light of evening. You could almost take a header into its depths. Forests encircle and darken it, their leaning branches reflected in the still waters. On all sides forested hills rise steeply to enclose this giant bowl with the lake in its hollow, and over the water and far away springs up the white crown of Kilimanjaro.

A path winds down from the terrace to a jetty where boats are moored. The precipice behind has been treated as a natural canvas on which to splash great bands of colour. A base of scarlet cannas and orange flowering shrubs glows against a dark leafy background; above it, creeping flowers cling to narrow ledges that have been scooped across the rock and seem to burn with crimson, heliotrope and gamboge. Across the lake a black and white fish-eagle sits motionless on a stump, his eye piercing the smooth clear water. Lake Duluti reminds one a little of those lovely tree-enclosed lakes of New Hampshire or Vermont, but even they cannot match Kilimanjaro's distant crest. The house and its rock-face garden, and the farms that support it, are the creation of Mrs. Gladys Rydon, like Frank Anderson one of Tanganyika's 'characters'—and a competitor of his for first place as a producer of seed beans.

At tea on the terrace above the lake, fat home-made scones, strawberry jam and dollops of yellow butter brought guilty memories of austerity in England.

"But it will come right," said Mrs. Rydon. "Everything is happening as it was planned. Next month we enter a highly important phase—Operation Elijah."

To British Israelites, all is pre-ordained. One can but admire the serenity which their faith induces.

"Here in East Africa," she added, "great events will soon occur.



## TANGANYIKA

We have a big part to play. There will be troubles and disasters, but we shall come through. The millennium starts in nineteen fifty-three."

From the Tanga road, the north Paré mountains rise ahead: steep, uncompromising slabs of granite, hard as a mailed fist, with twisted scrub clinging to the rock wherever it can gain a root-hold. Such hills are folded, their sides scored with deep clefts full of forest and generally the haunt of buffaloes. Our road ran to the very base of these hills and then turned aside to skirt them. They towered on our left, and we bumped eastwards close to the railway from Tanga to Moshi built by the Germans and now linked to the Kenya system at Voi.

To our right, though we could not see it, lay the Pangani river. We were indeed running down its wide bleached valley, and by a cluster of dukas we approached its swift-flowing waters. To a casual motorist this country looks merely hard, scrubby, monotonous, empty, to be seen with eyes narrowed against the white glare; but to survivors of the campaigns of 1914-18 it holds harder memories. It was here, in 1916, that a force of British, South African, Rhodesian, East African, Baluchi and Kashmiri soldiers fought their way from the north Paré mountains to the sea, clearing the Germans bit by bit from the Tanga line.

"No man, in after years, will visit the battlefields of Pangani," wrote Francis Brett Young in his brief classic description of this arduous minor campaign.<sup>1</sup> "No man, unless he wander there in search of game, will seek to look upon her sinister smile in the lovely winter weather of that deadly land."

It is true that to-day no trace remains of the passage of that long-forgotten army, or of the men who perished or the forces who were conquered there.

"It seemed to me that though the forest tangles of the Pangani close above the tracks we made, and the blown sand fill our trenches and drift above the graves of those we left sleeping there, that ancient, brooding country can never be the same again, nor wholly desert, now that so many men have lived intensely for a little while in its recesses." This wilderness he called "the country to which we have given a soul."

Would he find any vestige of that soul, any lingering imprint of the suffering and fortitude? I do not know; in those 30 years the scene can have changed but little; man has not yet forced his brand on to its rocky face. Yet on the river's lower reaches, civilisation thrusts

<sup>1</sup> *Marching on Tanga*. F. Brett Young.

## THE ROAD TO TANGA

here and there an iron claw. The Pangani falls have been harnessed to make power for sisal factories and for Mombasa's industries.

In nine hours we covered ground that had cost Smuts' men three months of trudging and toiling. I was in an Indian taxi. The owner, or rather the owner's son, a slender, somewhat taciturn adherent of the Aga Khan's Ismaili sect, was Moshi-born, and had been no further afield than Dar es Salaam. Such folk are East Africans, whatever the future of India may be. Yet my companion was dubious about his own future.

"Trade is not good any more," he said. This was not due merely to temporary causes like present shortages, but to a far more thorny reason—the rise of the African trader, and the economic racialism that, among a race-conscious and 'difficult' people like the Chagga, is simultaneously emerging.

"The Chagga have driven every Indian off the mountain," an official had said to me; he was referring not to Moshi township, where British principles of no racial discrimination are enforced, but to the trading centres outside, where the Chagga councils have refused to renew licences held by Indians. In future it will be not the European but the African whom we shall try, no doubt vainly, to convert to the practice of racial equality.

The distance from Moshi to Tanga is 265 miles. A rather surly African, almost a chain-smoker, accompanied us.

"He is my driver," the taxi-owner's son explained. As he was driving himself, I inquired why an extra hand was wanted. The young Indian looked surprised.

"It is too far for one." So they took it in turns. The road, though rough in places, was by local standards good; we were in by five o'clock.

Does the 'softening' which some fear in a generation of locally-born whites, due to the easy-going African waiting at their elbows for orders, affect the Indian immigrant even more than the European?

## TANGA

While Arusha bubbles on papain, Tanga booms on sisal. Last week the price went up by £20 a ton. Tanga is the headquarters of Tanganyika's largest industry, which turns out about 100,000 tons of sisal fibre every year.

A sisal baron—bearded, forceful and pocket-sized—took me to see some of the estates. After an interlude in the Labour Officer's smart new truck, which shed broken springs along a perfectly smooth road,

## TANGANYIKA

we sped in an older and therefore more reliable equipage up a broad, warm, fertile valley, grassed and full of trees, under the shelter of the Usambara mountains. Sisal is planted in this valley and on the lower foothills. Up the sides of the hills are native shambas, providing the worst examples that I have yet seen of cultivation on slopes without terracing. In places the slope looks almost vertical, and erosion phenomenal.

The baron finds in these long, regimented rows of blue-green, spike-leaved agaves marching across the land an æsthetic appeal as well as more solid financial comfort. He is one of a minority. We could agree only that sisal is always green, a point in its favour in a land that turns drably and universally brown in seasons of drought. It is an impersonal, industrial, brave-new-world sort of crop. Gangs of labour housed in bare camps hack off the leaves and pile them on trolleys which convey them to the factory; here the leaves are torn to bits and the fibre, looking like white horse-tails, is hung out to dry, while the waste is run into the nearest river, where it forms a scum and stinks to high heaven of bad drains. Only about three per cent of the leaf (by weight) is usable, the rest is thrown away.<sup>1</sup>

The leaves are not only ugly but unkind; their sharp points make excellent gramophone needles but also, when they prick you, provoke unpleasant sores. For this reason sisal-cutting used to be most unpopular work, but I was told that the trouble had been much reduced by the use of red palm oil, which, added to the diet, heavily reinforces with Vitamin A the body's resistance. A hospital dresser stands by at all ticket parades to examine the cutters' legs and dab antiseptic on to every prick.

To grow sisal needs much capital. The 'small man' has no chance. Most estates, therefore, belong to companies, though a few big (and at present prices very rich) individuals survive. The largest of these is Abdulla Karimjee, one of a fifth generation of Indians settled on this coast, a member of Legislative Council and a titan of Tanganyika's commercial world. Only about one-quarter of the capital sunk in this industry is British; the rest is Indian, Greek and Swiss.

Labour, like capital, is polyglot. This province, the biggest sisal producing region of the territory, needs about 60,000 or 70,000 men, and must recruit most of them far away. Sooner or later many bring their wives and families and settle on an unused corner of the estate, or, more likely, on land next door, belonging in theory to the local tribe

<sup>1</sup>Ten years' research in England, financed by British sisal growers, has now led to the discovery of valuable industrial uses for part of this waste.

## POLYGLOT LABOUR

but in practice unoccupied. Others, only about one-fifth of the total, come on contract from distant parts of the territory and from as far afield as the Belgian Congo and Portuguese East Africa.

Once 'signed on', they look to their employer to give them free food and housing and treatment if they fall sick. Although the climate is tropical and the hours of work average about five daily, their rations are worth 3,500 calories daily, compared with the 2,700 of a British workman. They get 3 lbs. of meat weekly as against the British worker's 10 oz.; 120 oz. of maize meal against 48 oz. of flour; 18 oz. of sugar against 8 oz.; and so on.

Experts say that fewer calories are needed, not more, in the tropics than in colder zones. Why, then, give the African more? The Government's answer is that so much leeway has to be made up. The average sisal worker, coming from his peasant holding, is like a slack furnace, almost out; he needs heavy stoking before he can put his back into even a five-hour day's work.

The Labour Officer, an ex-Kenya settler who abandoned his farm to fight and lacked money to re-start it, said:

"Kenya and Tanganyika have a lot to learn from each other if they'd only be less isolationist."

"Such as?"

"Tanganyika's housing and ration standards are higher and they're better enforced. But the attitude towards labour in Kenya is generally better. There's a feeling of personal responsibility you don't often find here: you know your own boys and look after them and they stay for years. It's a sort of feudal spirit which I personally think is best for both sides at the present stage of development."

"As an industry, we are short of twenty-five thousand men," the sisal baron said. "That means that this year twenty thousand tons of sisal just won't be cut—a dead loss to the country of one-and-a-half million pounds. Tanganyika has the men, but they won't work. Just before the war a Government committee declared that of the one and a half million able-bodied men in the Territory, about three hundred and twenty-five thousand were in employment, and another five hundred thousand working for themselves. Admittedly a guess, but a careful one.

"Well, that leaves nearly three-quarters of a million men idle: drinking beer and sitting in the sun. Nice for them, but how can the country progress? How can these big groundnut and mining schemes be carried through? In the war, when we *had* to have sisal, the Government had to fall back on compulsion. Sisal is the oldest and best

## TANGANYIKA

organised industry. If *we* can't get the labour, no one can—except by tapping and deflecting *our* supplies."

In 1944 the recruiting of labour was re-organised and put under a body called Silabu—the Sisal Industry Labour Bureau—with headquarters in Tanga and a system reaching to the borders of Ruanda-Irundi and Nyasaland. A fleet of lorries picks up volunteers at various points near their homes, perhaps on the Belgian border, and takes them to a depot, where every man is medically examined. If the doctor rejects him he is sent home by lorry, but successful candidates get free food and quarters and, if they need it, a fortnight in a 'reconditioning camp'; then Silabu takes them by rail or lorry to their destination.

This streamlined modern system will no doubt benefit the African, hitherto accustomed to walk perhaps three or four hundred miles on foot, taking months over the journey and working mildly here and there for his food as he goes along; yet will it not steal from his life a little more of its zest and colour? For the African, like ourselves, is a bit of a wanderer, an adventurer; he is captivated by the winding path and by the strange ways of foreign people; and his long journeys are not mere walks to work, they have for him, perhaps, something of the character of medieval pilgrimages, with material wealth and not spiritual grace as the goal. In his heart he may not wholly applaud the new mechanised system, but since, like the rest of us, he is glad to save himself trouble, he will certainly use it.

On most of the estates new and improved houses seemed to be springing up like daisies, some mud-and-wattle, some stone-and-tile. Bodily, the men are well looked after, as a rule, but one could see as yet little sign of attempts to cater for their minds, or to provide recreation. The baron was forcefully sensitive on this point.

"The industry has been built up on a shoe-string. It's been starved of capital, for ten years it was run at a loss. Costs had to be cut to the bone and beyond. To-day the price is seventy pounds a ton. Good enough, except that Belgian, Portuguese and Dutch planters get ninety pounds a ton for *their* crop. Do you know what it fell to in the slump? Twelve pounds ten a ton c.i.f. Tanga. That year, my company made a dead loss of ninety thousand pounds. We've years of leeway to make up and we can't do it unless we can plan ahead ten years.

"During the war we produced in East Africa one million tons of badly wanted hard fibre, all with too little labour and too little supervision. Now the price is better and we're spending all we can afford on re-housing our labour and on improving our estates. We're putting

## A TWENTY-THREE HOUR WEEK

up the bonus for labour again. You can't do everything at once. Welfare and all those things will follow, but we must attend to first things first. Some estates want re-equipping from top to bottom, their machinery is worn out. And how about labour increasing their output? I'm sorry to say that output per man fell considerably during the war. You can't expect to have everything on the basis of a twenty-three hour week, which according to the Labour Adviser to the Secretary of State is the average worked in the sisal industry to-day."

A good worker can complete his task by eleven o'clock in the morning; and he can earn double pay, if he wants to, by going on to do another task. But very few do so—probably not five men in every hundred. The extra cash is less important to them than their siesta. Under this biting sun, one can scarcely wonder; and the single task earns them their food and shelter. But with labour so relatively inefficient and output so low, how can the African gain a higher standard of living?

While output per man has fallen, output per acre is going up. Our baron, who has studied production methods in Java, Mexico, Haiti and elsewhere, claims to have doubled the yields on his estates by cultural methods alone.

"Density, spacing, cultivation," he said. "Those are the three methods of raising yields." Much has been found out recently about the treatment of the agave, mainly at the experimental station set up jointly by Government and industry near Tanga, and now maintained, and shortly to be expanded, by the industry alone.

The next big step must be mechanisation. As yet, no one has found a way to mechanise the heaviest operation, leaf cutting, and critics of the industry say that no one has seriously tried. A fortune awaits any man who can do so. Research in England, however, has evolved a chemical spray which, if it could be used mechanically, might save the industry 25,000 weeders.

Driving back through miles, it seemed, of straight, hard, spiky sisal rows, we paused at a sort of village where men heavily tattooed and cicatriced about the chest and sturdy women with grossly distended upper lips were at rest in the shade of their huts. These were Mawia from Portuguese territory, five or six hundred miles to the south, who screw ebony discs into the lips of their women to make them stick out like pigs' snouts: a cheerful, laughing, superstitious, clannish people, they arrive and work *en famille*, eat special food and are choosy about their employers.

## TANGANYIKA

It is hard to see how anyone can think that these tortured lips add to feminine beauty; fear of enslavement is said to have bred the custom. Now it is the disfigured old women who condemn as indecent and shocking the notion of doing away with it.

As labour, the Mawia are said to be difficult. I was told of an anti-malarial campaign recently launched on one of the estates, in the course of which the labour lines were sprayed with DDT. Rumour went round that this was bad medicine. The M'wea set on the unfortunate sprayers, damaged several and killed one. Fourteen men now await trial for murder, and the anti-malarial campaign has been suspended.

Tanga is a modern town, built about fifty years ago by the Germans. It has that air of planned spaciousness betraying a non-British origin; the solid German houses, appropriate and airy, are still in use, and seem better conceived than the modern box-like structures which are so much more costly and less convenient. White in the brilliant sunshine, they look out towards a warm and azure sea. As a port Tanga does good business, being the outlet for the hot sisal-growing valleys and for the fertile but undeveloped Usambara mountains some fifty miles inland.

On the northern face of these mountains, authority is engaged in a small but interesting tussle with East Africa's ever-present problem, that of too many humans wringing the life out of too little land.

The Mlalo basin is part of a river valley, lying between 4,000 and 5,500 feet, full of steep slopes savagely eroded. Each square mile of this hilly country is reckoned to carry, at a diminishing standard of living, about 500 humans and over 400 head of livestock.

The start of this experiment is a 'village survey' undertaken by an Austrian sociologist who is visiting every group of homesteads with a list of questions that would fill the most diligent bureaucrat with satisfaction.

Interesting sidelights on the structure of peasant farming are emerging. Here, for instance, are nine families trying to live off 25 acres of land. Yet no family (and these are large) could scrape a decent living off plots which average less than three acres. Fragmentation of holdings has reached such a pitch that one man is cultivating 37 different shambas, some of them almost literally no larger than a handkerchief.

The survey is to find out the facts; the Government is also trying to reclaim some of the ruined land. A thousand acres of hillside are being dealt with entirely by hand, without the aid of expensive machinery

## A GRADUATED TAX EXPERIMENT

which, though more efficient, could never be enlisted in his aid by the ordinary peasant. Under the eye of an Agricultural Officer, the Wasambaa are making contour banks across the slopes, planting hedges and carrying manure on to their cultivation.

All this is excellent, so far as it goes; everyone knows that it leaves unanswered most of the vital questions. What is to happen to the surplus population? Can you reform peasant farming so long as you leave unchanged the system of land tenure which brings about this fatal fragmentation? If the people are obdurate, what happens then? Is coercion to be used?

Authority proceeds warily with the Wasambaa, having been badly shaken by a recent experience with a neighbouring tribe in the Paré mountains. Throughout East Africa, direct native taxation consists of a poll tax paid by every adult male. (The amount varies by districts, but is generally between 10/- and 15/- a year.) This is a flat rate—rich and poor, everyone pays the same. It has long been recognised as unfair that a wealthy chief with nineteen wives, hundreds of cattle and a motor car should pay the same as the poorest of his subjects, but no one has yet been able to devise a practical basis for a fairer system.

In the Tanga province, a method worked out to assess individual Africans according to their wealth was tried experimentally in the Paré mountains, after the D.C. had discussed it with the local chief and his assistants and secured their agreement. But no one remembered to consult the ordinary tribesmen: or, rather, under a stultified form of local administration there was no machinery for doing so. And authority, in this instance, was out of touch with the people, and especially with the younger semi-educated men.

The people objected. There were violent protests, near-riots, the D.C.'s car was stoned. A tax-payers' strike followed. The graduated tax had to be abandoned, and now authority, which has for so long sat contemplating its navel of indirect rule through hereditary chiefs, is working out a scheme to set up a council on which younger Africans may air their views.

"The pork-pie hat on the street-corner," said the headmaster. "That's the universal ideal."

The pork-pie hat—preferably purple—is the present symbol of gentility in Tanga. Most of his 900 boys, he thinks, leave school not with the notion of getting down to a hard job of work in the world but with one idea—to get a soft office billet.

Of course blame is futile. The African copies what he sees and sees



## TANGANYIKA

what we show him; the trouble is that his glance does not penetrate deep enough and that we, bedevilled by our guilt complex in regard to coloured races, try to show him easy short cuts.

What this Government schoolmaster said echoed the blunt words of a recent article in the journal of the Universities Mission to Central Africa: ". . . the rising African generation is frankly, openly, mutinously materialistic in outlook."

Of course there are always exceptions and it is these that give the European master, who would not be teaching in Africa unless he had a liberal dash of idealism in his make-up, the faith to carry on with his task.

In Africa the school, a focus of Western influence, must always be fighting a battle with the home instead of working with it; but in a town that battle may be less against superstition, custom and apathy, as against lack of any parental authority and the lure of the street-corner. The casualties in this fight are the loss of more than two-thirds of the boys, who simply drop out of sight on their way up the school. There is more chance to make something of the 180 boarders, but even this may not always be a social good. The boys are, as it were, made over to the Government; their holidays they spend with relatives or friends in the town; their fees are paid by their local Native Treasury.

"For sixty shillings a year paid by someone else the parents shelve all responsibility for their child." He, for his part, grows up with no family or tribal background and therefore without social coherence, nor with the least idea of obligation to his parents, to the Native Authority that paid his fees or to his community—he *has* no community, in fact.

This lean and vigorous headmaster is attacking, so far as he can, the paralysing conviction among 'educated' Africans that only a clerk's job is respectable, that to use your hands is *infra dig*. From the second year carpentry is compulsory and boys are taught to mend their own clothes. After the third year a few can branch off into a five-year course in carpentry or tailoring with, of course, a lot of general schooling as well. This is a kind of apprenticeship, with emphasis, as in the old English system, on the sort of character-training and discipline that may one day produce a good craftsman with a pride in his job. But only ten boys a year can be accepted.

"At home an apprentice does ten thousand hours," the headmaster said, "and here only four thousand six hundred. Hours in the shops are seven-thirty a.m. until midday. But it's a start. Better than this—"

## DIET AND INTELLIGENCE

He waved his hand towards the window of his office where two P.W.D. *fundis* were contemplating a warped sash.

"Yesterday they put in three gauze panels. It took them a whole day. That's why African labour is the most expensive in the world."

Tanga, in advance of a good many English schools, provides a free midday meal for all day-boys—a powerful bait for attendance, as well as a body-builder. How far bad feeding accounts for mental backwardness has yet to be discovered. There is no doubt that some (so far exceptional) well-fed and well-cared-for African boys, if they apply themselves, can do as well as any white child at academic studies. A teacher from the Gold Coast once told me that the proportion of his African pupils who passed Cambridge School Certificate was considerably higher than the average for English children. Standards in West Africa are much higher than on the eastern side. Is it a coincidence that the Gold Coast diet is much richer in fats and proteins?

These questions need investigation. In East Africa, the proportion of boys who make the grade academically is still pathetically low, and of girls almost non-existent. But after talking to those who are actually teaching young Africans, one is left with an impression that the question of academic standards, important as it is, is not the major one. The question is ultimately a moral one, or, if you prefer it, one of ends rather than means. Of what use to the future is a clever African if he devotes his talents to purely selfish and possibly anti-social ends? The black markets of the world are full of clever people. "Though I speak with the tongue of men and of angels. . . ." There are quite a number of young Africans to-day rather like sounding brass, and even more like tinkling cymbals.

Plenty of European schoolmasters and mistresses are fully aware of this—nearly all of them, I should think. They do their best, but they are few and, if employed by Government, over-burdened with administrative detail. The cynicism of a materialistic age imposed on minds without tradition is almost overwhelming. And teachers can only lay the foundations.

"Everything depends on how the boys are treated when they leave here," said this headmaster. "If they're treated with almost unlimited patience and understanding—and that's expecting a lot—some of them will make useful citizens. But if they're not, they turn sour immediately, and then they'll be out for themselves first, last, and all the time."

He added: "And there's still the question of loyalties. Do we or do they know what we are working for?"

### Part Three

## ZANZIBAR

CLOVES and brass-studded wooden chests have made Zanzibar's mark on the outside world; the great carved doors, the tall, flaking, celandine-coloured buildings, the packed smelly little shops where lean and bearded sailors from the Hadhramaut await the monsoon—these seem made for the tourist. All that is lacking for his enticement is shelter for his head.

There is a proposal to pull down the solid Arab mansion that once belonged to Sir John Kirk, that great Englishman whose tact and patience triumphed at last over the late Sultan Barghash's reluctance to end the slave trade, and to build in its place an air-conditioned hotel. This prospect of brash modernity shocks Zanzibar, yet there is a feeling that something ought to be done to cultivate the neglected and profitable tourist.

As you walk down the Stone Town's miniature streets—just wide enough for a small car to squeeze through—you see turbaned figures coiled cross-legged on the tiny ledge-like verandas of the shops, with old copper ewers of black coffee beside them. Crooked daggers (the *jembia*) with handles of chased silver and silver ornamented sheaths are tucked into the belts which gather in their faded cotton robes. These are the dhow captains, the Manga Arabs. Their curly black beards, and slanting eyes under rust or tomato turbans, give a villainous look to their lean faces, but they sit there peaceably enough, sharing their ledge, very likely, with a sleeping goat and a clutch of fly-speckled brown babies. They look fantastically medieval. A great many of them seem to have bad eyes.

With the last monsoon they brought down dates, carpets, frankincense, dried fish and other wares from Basra and Aden; on the next they will return with mangrove poles, grain and copra. In between times they lounge about, drink coffee and perhaps repair their little vessels. It must be pleasant to follow a calling that gives you freedom, for a quarter of the year, to be a gentleman of leisure.

Their vessels are beached, or tethered in the Old Harbour. Here the houses are so ancient and ramshackle that one cannot imagine what holds them together; they prop each other up at all angles beside a

Dhow captain



A worker in leather





Produce market, Zanzibar

## ROPE-MAKING IN THE OLD HARBOUR

muddy and malodorous creek. Rain water lies in puddles in alleys threading the maze. The inhabitants sit at their doorways or crouch in the murk behind their counters, offering everything under the sun from mangoes, tumeric and simsim to rusty cans, empty bottles and old newspapers. Every man in Zanzibar seems to be a shopkeeper and every house a shop. Over one-third of the island's population lives in the town, presumably by selling things to each other. Yet the people do not try to molest you, as Egyptians do; they are dirty, ragged, poor and syphilitic, but they do not pester or beg.

Here, in the mouldering Old Harbour, one can see the birth and shaping of ropes. A rope may start life at the doorway of a hovel where an old woman, a retired prostitute very likely, twists the coconut coir dexterously between her fingers, rubbing it against her thigh. One end of a thin twist is fastened to a heavy wooden frame, the other dragged away to its full distance; half-a-dozen such cords are ranged side by side. Then, by a most ingenious device, these half-dozen thin cords are twisted into a single thick one, and three thick ones into a very thick one indeed, stout enough to hold the heavy lateen sail. Thus, no doubt, coir ropes were made by the Arabs of Zanzibar ten centuries ago and perhaps by the Persians and Phœnicians before them; nor has their way of retting the coir fibre changed, by burying coconut shells in sand below the tidemark and digging them up again a few weeks later. And the ropes still hold against the monsoon.

One would expect these muddy twisted alleys beside the harbour, and the narrow dirty streets with their little shops crammed together like fish in a net, to be spawning-beds of vice and crime. The vice, no doubt, is there, but the crime rate, surprisingly enough, is low, and (unlike most parts of the mainland) has not appreciably risen.

"My wife can walk by herself from one end of the Stone Town to the other," said the Provincial Commissioner, "without any fear of being robbed or molested. Folk here are honest."

Zanzibaris, with true insular certitude, attribute all serious crime to mainlanders.

"We have no racialism, for one thing," he added. "Of course there's a certain amount of jealousy, especially between Arab and Indian, but so far as I know there's no racial resentment against the European."

This alone, if it is a fair judgment and if it endures, is enough to make Zanzibar into a little paradise. Another paradisaical feature is that except (as usual) for Europeans, there is no direct taxation.

Like Tanganyika, the island has a ten-year development plan, to which the British taxpayer has given £750,000 to match a like amount

## ZANZIBAR

from local revenues. The biggest slice is to be spent on education, with the aim of increasing from the present 15 per cent to 40 per cent the proportion of the island's children who receive some schooling—a primary course of six years' duration. This must be done in stages, as more teachers are trained.

The agricultural programme aims at making Zanzibar and Pemba more nearly self-supporting and less dependent on rice, which before the war came mostly from Burma; now (as in the distant past) the islanders are growing for themselves most, but not all, of their needs.

A large sum, as in Kenya, is to be spent on housing, mainly in the African quarter. The scheme is simple. A certain area is condemned and every householder in it may choose between cash compensation for his demolished dwelling and a brand-new house built for him on the old site. The average value of the demolished houses is put at £60, of the new ones at least £120; the difference is a free gift from an official fairy godmother.

Many citizens, however, prefer the cash, which they can spend on a few glorious parties or on payments for a new wife—and possibly, if they are wily, in part on another condemned house, which in due course will be pulled down and yield another £60 in compensation.

The thrifty man moves with his family to the reception area, where he occupies a rent-free cottage until his new house is built. This does not take long. A concrete foundation, eight concrete pillars and a cement floor are all that is needed of imported materials. Then the roof goes on, of mangrove poles and palm thatch, and the walls go up, of coral rag weather-proofed with sand and burnt coral; the result is a pleasant, practical, adequate house with three rooms, a back-yard and beyond it a detached kitchen, store and latrine. This slum-clearance scheme will not make a deep impression on the problem, however. In a town of 60,000 inhabitants, only about 2,500 new houses can be afforded.

Most people are delighted with their fairy godmother gift, but there are always exceptions. We spoke to an elderly African who had lavished much care and work on his condemned house; asked his opinion of the spick-and-span new one, he answered sadly:

"If a man prays all his life for a boy child and God gives him a girl, what can he do?"

He had electric light (his own addition), a tap in the yard, and his cat had its own sleeping-mat.

In the African town, Ngambo, the Government is putting up an

## THE PURDAH CLUB

ambitious centre, the first of its kind, to provide recreation, infant welfare, reading matter, children's free milk and all the usual concomitants of social welfare. The architecture has broken away from English tradition, where it is apt to flounder uneasily among neo-Georgian Post Office and By-pass Cottage styles, to follow a more or less Eastern line—basic Indian shorn of the furbelows. The result is simple, pleasing and clean.

Amid a tumult of hammering and sawing I stood in an open-sided terrace-room where coffee will be served—no intoxicants, of course, in this Moslem land—while it was explained how the Chief Secretary, who has a passion for building and for planting trees, had taken the plan to his heart and laid out the houses and social centre as he wanted them. When it came to naming the place, however, Africans took matters into their own hands. Soon after the demolition and clearing started some wag christened it Poland.

"It's the first devastated area!" the Africans explained; and the name has stuck.

This energetic Chief Secretary is also the moving spirit behind the Purdah Club, surely something new in Arab countries. The aim is to inject a little interest and enlightenment into the sluggish lives of women kept out of the world by the strict laws of their religion. The poorer ones are busy enough with housework and children, but those who keep servants, as all well-to-do Arab and Indian families do, must idle away their lives like so many ladies of Shallot without their bit of weaving—for among them handicrafts are quite undeveloped.

So a benevolent Government, with British money, has bought and reconstructed an old Portuguese fort and fitted the high rooms with comfortable modern furniture, and the walled courtyard with equipment for games. Here we found no members, but a brisk English-woman standing by ready to instruct sari-clad ladies, divested of their black wrappings, in the arts of net-ball and deck-tennis.

"At first they've absolutely no idea what to do," she said sternly. "They simply stand there and *gape* at the ball. But they get keen as mustard when they grasp the idea—you'd be surprised."

One soon ceases to be surprised. The Chief Secretary's wife, in the hot season in this hot, oppressive climate, gives lessons in ballet-dancing in the Residency dining-room; and the P.C.'s South African wife dashes about the sweltering Stone Town gathering up astonished dhow-captains to sit for her while she flings rich colours on to the canvas with a palette knife.

About half the Purdah Club's members are Arab and the other half



## ZANZIBAR

Indian. It is a new experiment to mix the two races, who normally remain aloof and mutually suspicious. Because it has been so lavishly fitted and is as yet so sparingly used, the club has been a trifle maliciously nicknamed Dutton's Folly. It is true that the English organisers have hitherto found difficulty in getting the members to enter into some activity or even into conversation, their natural inclination being to sit about silently, no doubt half startled and half abashed at their own temerity in being there at all.

Indian women show the most spirit, especially those from political families, and left to themselves would certainly rule the roost. A good deal of unobtrusive effort in Zanzibar seems to be devoted to preventing the overshadowing and squeezing out of the softer Arab by the more forceful Indian. Sometimes this takes overt legal form; for instance the higher civil service is confined to Arabs and Europeans, and before the war the Government redeemed the Arab landowners' debts to Indian money-lenders in order to prevent the land from passing out of Arab hands.

Beit-el-Ajaib, the House of Wonders, stands on the waterfront next to the Purdah Club. It was built in 1883 by the illustrious Seyyid Barghash bin Said as a palace to out-do all other palaces in his domains, in which the whole coast of Azania, from Mogadishu almost to Mozambique, was then embraced; now it houses the Government of the ruling Sultan. Three storeys, each with a wide porticoed balcony, surround a central court, and a wooden clock-tower crowns the flat-roofed whole. This palace was remarkable in its day for size and splendour but now, a little shabby, its glory resides in its great carved doors.

Massive, thick, immensely heavy, their fine rococo decoration is gilded, and Indian influence has arched the normally squared lintels. These Arab doors show, in their elaborate carving, a traditional symbolism. A student of them, Mr. J. J. Adie, sees in the fish always found, under many different and formalised guises, at the base of the upright separating the two halves of the doors, a derivative of the Syrian fish-goddess Atargatis, a queen of fertility. The lotus, the chain, the frankincense tree and the date-palm are other common symbols, representing (again) fertility, security, wealth and plenty; these are interspersed among texts from the Koran.

Zanzibar's constitution involves one of those delicate and indefinable relationships so often considered by other nations as typically British and hypocritical. The Government is not King George's but His

## SEYYID SIR KHALIFA BIN HARUB

Highness the Sultan's, whose crimson flag, and not the Union Jack, flies over the island; and laws are promulgated in his name.

The present Sultan is Seyyid Sir Khalifa bin Harub. He is the seventh descendant of the famous Seyyid Said bin Sultan to sit on the throne. It was Seyyid Said of Muscat who in 1832 moved his seat of government from the Gulf of Oman to Zanzibar and built up an empire that covered two-thirds of the eastern coast of Africa and stretched, at least in theory, a thousand miles inland. (He is said to have sired 112 children.) After a dispute about a later successor, in the course of which British warships bombarded the palace in order to expel a usurper, the Sultanate came to a young Harrovian, Seyyid Ali, who, on his way to England to attend the Coronation of George V, disappeared off the ship at Naples and fled from the pomp and shackles of royal office to the gaiety and freedom of Paris. Here he abdicated and, after a suitably dissolute interval, died. The present Sultan, who had married his sister Matuka, accepted the throne and has ruled soberly ever since.

You might say that he is a figurehead, and to some extent that is so, but he presides at Executive Councils and countersigns all ordinances and once a week the British Resident pays a state call, while the Resident's wife takes tea with the young Sultana. It is true that since Zanzibar was placed under the Colonial Office in 1913, British members of the Colonial Service direct the Government departments, make up a majority on the small Legislative Council and in fact administer the island; nevertheless the Sultan's advice is genuinely sought and digested. The present Sultan, after 35 years of rulership, has gained a wisdom and an experience which no ephemeral Resident would be so foolhardy as to ignore.

To-day government by Arabs only would be government by a minority, and one that the majority do not always respect. Of a population of a quarter of a million, only 35,000 are Arabs of pure descent. There are about 15,000 Indians and the rest, a 200,000 majority, are African, for the most part descendants of mainland tribesmen whom the Arabs enslaved. As against that, Zanzibar is a country whose ruler (in 1890) voluntarily placed himself and his people under British protection—in order to avoid being swallowed up by the Germans, whom he hated. He never ceded his island, nor have his successors done so.

The British intention is to educate the people and gradually to hand over to them more and more authority; then, step by step, to withdraw.

Matters are still in their early stages; it is only now that plans are being made to set up a system of councils to manage local government,

## ZANZIBAR

which hitherto has been conducted by the Sultan's Arab officials under a few senior British Commissioners. The Legislative Council as yet has no elected members.

When the time comes, in whose favour are we to withdraw? That of the Arabs, the titular rulers; of Indians, the commercial power; or of Africans, the numerical majority?

A combination, presumably, of all three. That looks all right on paper: a sort of permanent coalition of races. But will the races ever coalesce? In Britain our own parties are based on political opinion, a far less deep and fundamental cleavage than that of blood, custom and faith; even then, we can achieve a coalition only temporarily, and only under the severest stress. What grounds have we to suppose that a permanent coalition can ever be brought about between races so different, so intolerant and so filled with mutual suspicion? None at all, so far as I can see; that has not been the experience of India or Palestine or Indonesia; yet our whole colonial policy is based on the rosy-tinted assumption that this revolution in human nature will peacefully occur.

Even Zanzibar, beneath a placid and benevolent surface, has its shoals.

"The African will come out on top eventually," said a man with much experience of Zanzibar. "He's more virile, more pushful, more prolific than the Arab."

"And what about the Indian?"

"Ah! That remains to be seen. The African has the weight of numbers on his side, the Indian has brains and diligence. But the African is coming up——"

It is true, already he has come a long way. One of the sights of Zanzibar is the Anglican cathedral, built by the Christian Missions that strove so valiantly against the slave trade of which this island was the heart and centre; and an impressive sight it is, in this ramshackle, dilapidated city. As an act of deliberate symbolism, it was built on the site of the old slave market, where men and women from as far away as the shores of the Great Lakes were hawked to bidders from the plantations of Pemba and the households of Muscat. (It was from Zanzibar that Livingstone started on his last journey, crusading until the end against the Trade; the house he lived in while he fitted out the expedition still stands.) Up from slavery—but so far, most of the impetus has come on the African's behalf from others, from well-wishers. The test, when he must use his own efforts to complete the enterprise, that hard 'continuing of it to the end', still lies ahead.

## 'SUDDEN DEATH' OF CLOVES

As you drive out of town through a part of the flat, lush, green island, the vegetation seems overwhelming; it holds the eye as, in a sappy prison. You pass through forests of coconuts. Smooth, even, slender, their grey branchless boles rise like a thousand graceful columns, yet there is something almost reptilian about their gloss, constricting about their uniformity. The distant prospect is shut out by so many coconuts; I think, if one lived here, they would breed a sort of claustrophobia.

Zanzibar's famous clove plantations to-day present a melancholy appearance. In the distance one sees, as it were, a whitish-grey mist lying above the grass, and this resolves itself into a maze of brittle leafless twigs and lifeless branches: for many of the plantations have been smitten by the disease aptly known as 'sudden death', and others ravaged by a most unnatural drought which afflicted this normally damp island two years ago.

'Sudden death' has so far baffled the scientists. They do not know its cause, and can prescribe no treatment. As it takes perhaps fifteen years for a clove tree to reach productivity, the planters, nearly all Arabs and Africans and mostly 'small men', are in despair. Research proceeds, as does the disease; a tree may be dead in three weeks; meanwhile, an outflanking movement by the Agricultural department, under an energetic Scots director, attempts to replace dead cloves with plantations of another order.

About sixty years ago, Seyyid Barghash introduced for trial a few cocoa trees from the East Indies. Interest in the experiment faded, and for over half a century the trees were neglected, yet they thrived. When 'sudden death' smote the cloves, official attention turned to these still healthy immigrants, and seed was collected and planted. Now there are nurseries of seedlings, and plantations of several thousand vigorous young trees.

"I've seen no trees as good as these, for their age, in the West Indies," said their guardian. It is early days yet to be sure that cocoa will do in the island, and it has its own enemies—swollen shoot disease in West Africa, witches' broom in the West Indies. So far, the experiment promises well. The Agricultural department issues seedlings free to planters who have lost their cloves, and sober optimism informs their attitude.

Not that cloves, as an industry, is finished. The disease strikes older trees, leaving younger ones intact; and in the island of Pemba, which produces three-quarters of the crop, damage has been milder.

In a warehouse by the harbour sacks of cloves are piled to the roof

## ZANZIBAR

awaiting shipment. It is pleasant to enter a shed that smells of apple-pie and to handle so clean and fragrant a commodity. The clove itself is a little myrtle bud which must be picked at exactly the right moment and dried for four days in the sun.

"Everything depends on the drying." A produce inspector roams about the warehouse extracting and analysing samples from the sacks. "A carefully picked, well-dried sample that hasn't got rained on during drying—bright, clean and of golden colour—that's your first grade. Most of it goes to India."

The Netherlands East Indies used to be the biggest buyers. When they went out of the market, and war turned people to less attractive crops than cloves, sacks piled high in these warehouses and prices fell. Zanzibar was in a poor way for, in the absence of direct taxation, the biggest item in its revenue is an export tax on cloves. Now things are looking up again, but a ceiling is clamped on to prices by the manufacture in America of synthetic vanilla. Clove oil is a rival source, so if the price of cloves goes too high, consumers turn to the artificial product.

Zanzibar is an island of middlemen. Most of its inhabitants seem to live by taking in each others' washing. Some years before the war the Government, convinced that the peasant clove-grower was supporting on his narrow back too many parasites and receiving altogether too small a share of the proceeds, helped to set up the Clove Growers' Association, whose purpose was to buy the whole crop, to bulk, grade and pack it, and to sell it direct to overseas buyers.

Success would have involved the eclipse of many petty traders and exporters. Naturally, these protested, and (as is the rule where Indian interests are concerned) they enlisted the help of their homeland compatriots. India boycotted the whole Zanzibar clove industry. The effect on prices was cataclysmic. After a short struggle, the Clove Growers' Association was forced to abandon its major purpose and to-day the Indian middleman is back in the saddle. He buys the crop from the Association and handles all the export side, and cloves have a free market—no controls. But the Association has succeeded in putting a floor under the price by means of buying from the growers at a fixed rate, and all the grading is in its hands. Thus it is able to guard the purity and reputation of Zanzibar cloves.

The rich folk to-day are not, as of old, clove-planting landowners but Indian merchants, some of whom belong to families settled on the island for generations.

The aristocratic Arabs live in tall white houses, without inside doors,

## THE SHARIFF FAMILY

of such a size that the average English dwelling would fit into the living-room with no trouble at all. High ceilings and wide balconies give light and air, Persian rugs are scattered over floors made shiny by the tread of many sandals. Such houses have little ornament, but their owners take pride in silver incense bowls and ewers to hold rosewater, in heavy studded chests and beaten copper trays. The outward-seeming lives of those who inhabit them have changed little in the last century, but, beneath the surface, impoverishment has gnawed away at the pride and splendour; even outwardly change, like a steady flame, is beginning to melt the cast-iron form of Arab custom.

We called to-day on the wife of a mudir: that is to say, of one of the Sultan's Arab officials, a man in charge of a district, at once magistrate, revenue collector, arbitrator and registrar. We drank tea in a sort of porch lined with highly-glazed tiles of a pseudo-eastern design, and talked stiltedly of welfare; for this soft-spoken, well-born woman—childless, like so many Arabs—is unusually emancipated, and goes forth without the veil to help the English woman welfare officer find jobs for female ex-prisoners, take sick children to hospital and dispose of orphan babies. Many Arab women would feel naked and ashamed were they to be seen abroad without the black voluminous *bui-bui*.

The Shariffs are another emancipated family, and a famous one in Zanzibar. Were you to be born a Shariff and a female your fate would be settled: there are seven Shariff daughters, all teachers. Only one has left Zanzibar. She is Esha, the first Moslem girl ever to enter Makerere College. Not only this, but her family refused several good offers of marriage in order that she might thus advance her career. Such a thing is unheard-of, and must have caused a furore of cluckings in the women's quarters from one end of the island to the other. Her father, a Lamu Arab, and prince of the town's milk supply, is imbued to an unusual extent with Western ideas, perhaps because of a long sojourn in Natal, coupled with the influence of his wife, a South African Malay, and a woman of great personality. In this strict Moslem world, still living in a past age, many no doubt look askance at the Shariffs for their foreign blood and foreign ways: but respect them, also, for their wealth and brains.

Even for Europeans peaceful Zanzibar, well-liked in spite of its heat and humidity, is softly and gently changing. Of an evening Arab, Indian and African disport themselves amicably together in the shady, spacious green recreation grounds reclaimed from the sea by the enterprise of John Sinclair, a previous Resident with a flair for architecture and town planning; while at the English Club the Europeans devote

## ZANZIBAR

themselves to golf and tennis. The ageing Sultan is popular and Anglo-Arab rule benign. But the British Resident, Sir Vincent Glenday, a vigorous, honest-to-goodness man of action whose life has been spent on civilisation's fringes among desert nomads and cattle-thieves, and who presides with that mixture of resolution and tact, informality and ceremonial, that so pleases orientals, has done away with a good deal of the Pooh-bah atmosphere that used to infect the island with a self-important absurdity.

"Before the war there were only two places left in the British Empire," I was told, "where officials wore dinner jackets for cocktail parties and changed for dinner into tails—the Gambia and Zanzibar." Now, at any rate in Zanzibar, people look tidy, but are otherwise quite normally dressed.

## *Part Four*

# TANGANYIKA

### DAR ES SALAAM

From the air, Dar es Salaam seems orderly, planned and small—a capital in miniature. Here is no ugly sprawling fringe, no shantytown, no industry. Coconuts flank the outskirts, flowering trees and creepers proliferate within: all under heavy skies, with a sea calm and fleckless lapping but not breaking on a thin white shore. The European houses are white, clean and half-buried (or so it appears from up aloft) under canopies of trees; the native huts are for the most part palm-thatched.

Tanganyika's capital looks a soft, snug, easy, tropical sort of place. Even the docks appear genteel. Neat white yachts and sailing dinghies ride motionless at anchor by the waterfront. Storms, if they come, must lead to no thundering violence on this flat, quiet shore. The harbour is deep and sheltered, but the rusty hulk of a half-submerged German warship reminds one that it has seen trouble in its day.

Europeans like being stationed in 'Dar', and no wonder. Here they have been able to feel secure, the turmoil of the world has scarcely reached them, their own internal storms have been bounded by the rim of their teacup and, so far at least, well under control.

The Germans founded Dar es Salaam some 50 years ago. It is perhaps typical of the two nations that the British grafted themselves on to existing Arab towns, old and ramshackle and muddled as they were, adding bits on here and there, whereas the Germans preferred to start with a clean slate. So on the Kenya coast the old cities, Mombasa, Malindi, Lamu, have carried on, but here Bagamoyo, Pangani, Kilwa crumble away while Tanga and Dar es Salaam thrive. The new towns are better planned, and much tidier. But one misses the sense of history and the continuity of things.

It would be a fascinating study in any African land to trace the growth of the so-called intelligentsia. In each country it has reached a different stage. Tanganyika is perhaps ten or fifteen years behind Kenya which in turn is a lap or two (so I understand) behind Nigeria; but the road to be travelled seems everywhere much the same. Members of



## TANGANYIKA

this intelligentsia grow progressively more politically minded, increasingly unrealistic and more and more impatient to snatch from European hands the promised reins of power.

Tanganyika has barely started along this road. In education it has lagged so far behind its neighbours that there are as yet scarcely any Africans with, for instance, an English university training. This 'backwardness' means that they seem more friendly, less fluent, more hesitant, less demagogic. They advance grievances, but these are on a different plane. Whereas in Nairobi young men will declaim in familiar clichés on the exploitation of the worker and the liberty of the subject, in Dar es Salaam they are still more concerned with the shortage of rice and the rate of pawnbrokers' interest. Nairobi is the centre of a strong political union; Dar es Salaam offers a choice of clubs.

Of the dozen or so English-speaking Africans I met in the D.C.'s office—perhaps a poorly chosen rendezvous, but, unlike Nairobi, the town has no social halls or political offices—all belonged to one or other of these clubs. The members meet in hired rooms behind shops or in the houses of Indians: as a rule stuffy, rather squalid places lit by hurricane lamps, full of cigarette smoke and the smell of sweating bodies.

"The Egyptians," said a shopkeeper. "That is the good club."

"Why is it called the Egyptians?"

"It has a band which plays in the Egyptian style."

What that was, he did not define. The members sometimes hire a hall from an Indian for a dance; otherwise, they 'just meet'.

There is no political organisation, as yet, to compare with the Kenya African Union. The nearest approach is the African Association, said to have branches in all the main centres. The secretary claimed for it 30,000 supporters, but another member disputed this, and an argument broke loose between the two. Money trouble seems to have arisen already, and the dismissals and abscondings of secretaries and treasurers which are the birth-pangs of such organisations. It is not clear what the subscriber gets for his shilling a year levy. The objects are vaguely described as 'to advance African welfare'; as to methods, everyone seemed hazy.

All is embryonic, but it has in it the same germ-plasm as maturer bodies elsewhere: the desire of the 'educated' African to express his viewpoint, a vague idea that tribal lines of division are out of date, and the human yearning for prestige and power as expressed by individuals among the intelligentsia. The most 'extreme' of these bodies is the Uzaramu Union, which preaches that the coastal strip round Dar es

## RIISING COST OF LIVING

Salaam, with its polyglot and socially disorganised Bantu peoples, should secede from Tanganyika and set up a 'protected state' like Zanzibar, under its own flag and sultan.<sup>1</sup>

The plant of indigenous journalism has not yet thrust its prickly leaves through this virgin soil. The literate African has hitherto been content with a weekly Government newspaper, accurate and lifeless. But Said Juma, one of this group, is a would-be editor. He looks like a K.A.R. sergeant-major, black and deep-voiced and burly, but is in fact a clerk retired after twenty years in the Secretariat who is putting his gratuity into the founding of the 'Voice of Africa', a Swahili weekly.

John Rupia is of a different type. Tall, slim, of a scholarly vein and precise diction, he has an almost plaintive manner and strong Anglican beliefs; he is the proprietor of the International African Bar and Restaurant. A small, soft-spoken, ingratiating Bondei from Tanga looks like a parson with something of Mr. Slope's manner; in fact, he is the owner of a store. Others were born as far afield as the Belgian Congo, Zululand, Lamu and Nyasaland.

All complain of the rising cost of living. The price of a *kanga*, for instance—the printed cotton cloth worn by women—is to-day over 9/-, and before the war they could be had for 3/-. My informants, all men, complained feelingly that women were always badgering them for new ones; every few months there is a 'new look' at least as regards the pattern—the *kanga* carries a bold design often embodying some object like crossed tennis rackets, a bicycle wheel or the ace of spades—and then their wives cannot endure the shame of being seen in a *kanga* of any but the very latest fashion. Rents have doubled, they added, and wages risen only by half. Yet, as they discussed the difficulties, one of these duka-owners unwittingly contradicted his theme of poverty and hardship.

"Before the war I paid my driver forty shillings monthly. Now I must pay him one hundred shillings."

The black market price of rice has soared, yet it does not appear that anyone goes hungry. Every African has his out-of-town shamba where most of his food is grown by a wife who moves out there from seed-time to harvest.

It is a grievance, however, that when a man pawns his watch or extra pair of trousers and goes, months later, to redeem the pledge, he is told that he cannot recover his things because the time-limit is up.

<sup>1</sup>Since writing this, Dar es Salaam has had a strike; a shadow of Mombasa's, but an indication that threads link the town with its northern neighbour.

## TANGANYIKA

"He does not understand what happens to his property at the pawnbroker."

"But surely it's clear enough. . . ."

"Uneducated people cannot understand."

One month, six months, a year, it is all much the same to most Africans, and they do not see why it should not be the same to Uncle. Abuse of pawnbrokers (all Indians) followed; but Said Juma rather primly observed (insofar as you can be prim when you look like a heavyweight boxer):

"I think that pawnbrokers are of benefit to the African."

Like all coastal cities, Dar es Salaam has its Liwali, who presides over the Arabs: in this case an attractive, much-respected man who came originally from Lamu and fought on the Allied side in the 1914-18 war. He took us to see a school, packed until it bulged with white-clad little Moslems of every tint and size, and an instance of self-help, for the Moslem community themselves raised the money to start it. Outside, on an open space where (the Liwali explained) there is to be a social hall one day, small naked and pagan Africans darted and dived in a water-tank like chocolate fishes, undisturbed by the distant drone of their Moslem brothers reciting the multiplication tables or bits of the Koran. The Liwali's flock of Arabs is small, but over half the native population of about 45,000 reckons itself as Moslem.

Only a small proportion of the town's children gets any form of schooling, but there is one difficulty less to deal with here: that of language. Swahili is the mother tongue of all these coastal people, and even up-country its roots go deeper in Tanganyika than they do elsewhere. The excellence of the Swahili may partially account for the backwardness of English, but it is pleasant, even so, to hear this melodious language well-spoken, with respect for structure and grammar, and not used merely as a means of making oneself misunderstood.

In a small, low room in the usual mud-and-wattle house, half-furnished with a couple of trestle tables and a few benches, John Rupia's barmen serve calabashes of excellent palm toddy to customers at 20 cents a time in the International African Bar and Restaurant. Yet (such is human nature) the customers want to buy relatively tasteless and much weaker European beer for 1/3 a bottle, for no other reason than that the law at present forbids them to do so. Thus a law passed in one generation to prevent Europeans from exploiting Africans by selling them cheap intoxicants, is resented by the next as an instance of racial discrimination.

## JOHN RUPIA'S DELEGATION

Later in the day we ran into John Rupia again. We were looking at houses built by the Government for visiting African notables, such as the two new Legislative Councillors, whose accommodation raises the usual questions. The ordinary native 'hoteli' is too sordid, and in the Europeans' New Africa Hotel, although in theory no colour-bar is permitted, they might feel themselves fish out of water; and so, unless they have obliging friends, the only choice open to them is an Indian hotel. The Government has had the imagination to build four most attractive cottages, of a stamp that would satisfy any European. These have electric light and cookers, built-in cupboards, 'the usual offices', and are furnished down to the last sofa-cushion and shaving-mirror. The chief or councillor simply moves in with his servants and lives there without charge for the duration of his visit—an arrangement which, one can guess, would be envied by any British Member of Parliament.

As a session of Legislative Council is due to start, the cottages were being prepared for the two African members. Proudly displaying the furniture, my guide flung open a cupboard to reveal a half-consumed bottle of brandy; he shut it hastily and we admired the soft furnishings, for spirits are even more *verboden* than beer. Then John Rupia arrived as a one-man delegation to urge upon the chiefs the repeal of legislation which forbids the sale of European drinks to Africans. He should have found a sympathetic listener.

Dar es Salaam has no Government and no municipal native housing. Hitherto an African working here has either rented a room, or leased a plot for the modest sum of 6/- a year and built his house on it. The township has now run out of plots; newcomers pour in, rents go up and overcrowding worsens. Soon people are likely to pour in even faster, for Leibeg's intend to can 50,000 head of cattle a month here, other firms are nosing round for sites and Dar es Salaam's long slumber seems to be ending.

Last year the Government took its introductory nibble at the housing question. The first completed houses—only about twenty of them, a drop in the ocean—are sensibly and pleasantly built of plastered concrete blocks and palm-thatch roofs. They are not so well equipped as those in Mombasa and the whole scheme is on a much smaller scale, but they will cost about half as much. Even so, the rent is not economic.

The oddest house in 'Dar' is probably the Governor's, a Moorish palace on the sea, built to replace a German edifice destroyed by shelling in World War I, and designed by Sir John Sinclair, a former Resident of Zanzibar. It is a sort of architectural bastard, at its heart

## TANGANYIKA

a room with fourteen doorways filled with lovely, but unhappily stripped, Arab doors removed by a previous incumbent from Bagamoyo. Here Sir William Battershill, least pompous of Governors—approachable, humorous and shrewd—and his wife dispense a genial, English-country-house sort of hospitality quite at variance with the stiff splendour of their surroundings.

A double line of American cars, each glossier than the last, made one anticipate something like a Governor's garden party. We climbed the steps of a large house overlooking the Indian Ocean to find twenty or thirty guests gathered on a wide veranda set for tea.

My guide was Mr. Nazerali, a slight Ismaili of diffident manner who has for years been a member of Executive Council; my host a scion of the Karimjee family of sisal fame. The women looked as well-to-do Indian women always look: graceful, poised and flower-like in their muslin saris. (That of my hostess was powder-blue dusted with silver stars.) The creamy-skinned young women wore jasmine blossoms in their raven hair. How gentle and serene their movements appeared, how self-possessed these dark-eyed leisured wives! Beside them, we Europeans seem restless and explicit, the African earthy and shallow.

"I take no part in politics," said the men, one after the other, and spoke with enormous venom of Paper 210.<sup>1</sup> One after the other they damned it, not because they doubted its efficiency or wisdom, but for one reason only: an over-mastering hatred of Kenya.

"We want nothing whatever to do with that country," exclaimed a strong-featured, forceful Sikh with a burly rugby-player look. "Why do they want to come down here to dominate us? Hands off Tanganyika! We dread this cold wind from the north!"

One would have thought, to listen to them, that Paper 210, with its plans for closer practical collaboration between the three countries, had been written by the spiritual forms of the earliest and most belligerent Kenya settlers, instead of in Downing Street; one would have thought that the present settlers cherished it as their dearest dream, instead of reluctantly accepting it as a disagreeable necessity. But everyone echoed the words of the militant Sikh.

"What can it do for Tanganyika? We shall fight it tooth and nail! Kenya ideas, Kenya customs, will reach down to contaminate us. We have some experience of this collaboration! Tanganyika suffers every time."

"How *do* you suffer, in practice?"

<sup>1</sup>Inter-territorial Organisation in East Africa. Colonial No. 210, 1947.



CHAGGA CHIEF ABDIEL SHANGALI  
Member of Legislative Council



Bush into groundnuts : bulldozers near Kongwa

A Gogo homestead



## TEA WITH MR. NAZERALI

"We lose trade. Our coffee goes to Mombasa, instead of coming to Tanga and Dar es Salaam. Our cotton goes out across Lake Victoria along Kenya's railway——"

"But surely that's a matter of geography——"

"No, politics! We pay duties to protect Kenya's industries. To foster their prosperity, our costs of living must rise. Look at the Post Office—an amalgamated service. If we complain, Nairobi takes six weeks, two months to reply. Nairobi will dominate. Let us be left to manage our own affairs! Let Kenya keep away!"

Such bitter hatred of a neighbour cannot be dismissed as mere parochialism, although it has an element in it of 'keep off the grass' now that the grass seems emerald-green. Tanganyika is prosperous; Indian capitalists such as my hosts prosper with it, and doubtless feel no communistic urge to share these benefits with their neighbours. But only emotion, not mere calculation, could so envenom the darts of opinion.

"I went to Nairobi with a European for a meeting—to the same meeting, our status was the same. *He* stayed in a good hotel. I could not go there, even for a cup of tea!"

A doctor added: "I travelled on the Kenya railway to Uganda and there was no restaurant car. At Nakuru, the train stopped for dinner; the hotel there would not admit Indians. I went hungry. I am a Mason. At the Lodge, everyone is on an equal footing, but out in the street Europeans look the other way."

Time and time again, scratch beneath the surface of politics and you reach down to wounded racial pride. It needs little imagination to understand the bitter resentment of these educated Indians, any one of whom could buy up most Europeans and (more important) all of whom follow the same outward code of manners, at being labelled 'Indian—inferior' and kept out of good hotels. (It is a curious commentary on human nature that Torr's, Nairobi's largest hotel, is Indian-owned, and most of the others belong to Indians or Jews.) How Nairobi is distrusted! When it becomes the East African capital, it will surely have to adopt a more adult attitude towards its visitors.<sup>1</sup>

No doubt with reason, people seem to apprehend the spread of a bad custom more than they welcome the opportunity to proselytise a good one. These Indians fear the outward radiation from Kenya of the

<sup>1</sup>One of the most intelligent Africans I met in Tanganyika assured me that in Nairobi Africans were charged ten cents merely to enter a European shop—an interesting example both of the subtle sort of anti-European propaganda that gets about, and of the inability of even the best-educated Africans to disbelieve it.



## TANGANYIKA

idea of white supremacy, just as Europeans in Kenya fear the inward pressure of Indian competition and political intrigue. Why should not social missionaries from Tanganyika spread the gospel of equal treatment for men of equal standards into the heathen wilds of Kenya, thus coming to the rescue of Indians there? But my hosts did not rise to this suggestion.

"Leave us alone!" they repeated. "They must fight their own battles in Nairobi. We don't want to go there, and we don't want anyone from Nairobi to come here.

"Tanganyika for the Indian Tanganyikans!"

"The African? He must come up and take his place, but he won't be ready to manage his own affairs for many generations."

All efforts to turn the conversation into non-political channels were unavailing. The women were reticent and perhaps unsure of their English; the men wonderfully fluent, and obsessed. The world outside, except for India, might not have existed; one sensed a good deal more of passion than of philosophy.

It is odd to find these able and intelligent men so frightened of Kenya. To an outsider, it seems likely that the southern rather than the northern neighbour will one day become the dominant partner. Power derives from strength, and Tanganyika, with its newly discovered lead and coal fields, has mineral sinews.

As to relations between Indian and African, one encounters a slurring over, a waving aside, on the Indian part. But many Europeans rightly or wrongly believe that a concerted effort is on foot, inspired by Congress Party leaders overseas, to undermine the British influence and to link African with Indian in a united anti-European front.

A man whose word I would not doubt told me this story. At a discussion group of senior African pupils, a boy described how one day, as he was walking along the street of a small up-country town, an Indian called him on to his veranda and gave him a glass of beer. While they drank together, the Indian explained how Europeans were exploiting and oppressing the native and at the end of their conversation gave him a present of five shillings.

"Europeans *never* give me five shillings!" the boy exclaimed, delighted with his generous new friends.

"There is a deliberate Indian movement of sedition," said this individual. He is a man with no axe to grind, and a lifetime of intimacy with the Tanganyika African.

Rain comes down in torrents every day. At this time of year, in

## THE 'TANGANYIKA COURSE'

April, the climate is torrid and sticky, the atmosphere as moisture-laden as a wet sponge; even after three days, a pair of suede shoes has green whiskers.

It is trying for Europeans who sweat in their offices, wrestling with paper and files. They work hard. This was not always so. There is a story about a past departmental director whose servant went to the office every morning at eight, hung his master's hat on a peg and opened a file on his master's desk; then he went home to get his master's early-morning tea.

Times have changed, but I heard no regrets. In a sad, decomposing world, Tanganyika is remarkable: there is a belief here in the future, a feeling that long years of frustration and neglect have ended in one of those bursts of progress that sometimes overtake a country.

A ten-year development plan is at last, after many years of deliberation and sifting, complete on paper, and the money set aside; in the Secretariat, an energetic ex-D.C., one of the younger generation, presides over its gradual unfolding. The groundnut scheme bubbles away like an active volcano, new mines are being opened up, surveyors are out aligning new railways. The demobbed soldiers, 80,000 of them, are back—mostly on their shambas, resting after their labours.

"Our ex-soldiers are settling back with pleasure into the primitive state," a D.O. told me; but here, as at Kabete, a few of the more ambitious are being well and quickly trained by British craftsmen to fill the skilled jobs everywhere awaiting them.

It is not only men who toil in this clammy heat. In the old prison-like Lutheran Mission, in a sort of catacomb, two women conduct what is known from the Sudan to Rhodesia as the Tanganyika Course.

About 150 little flags on a map of eastern Africa represent the pupils, ranging over eight territories from the Zambesi to the Nile. Every week the postbag disgorges packets of lessons coming back for correction, and quite clearly little Jim from Laropi or Rosebud from Zomba are real individuals to their distant teachers, who say: "You've heard of a pupil at Njoro? Yes, that would be Peter so-and-so; quite a bright boy, though a little behind in his maths; then there's Jenny Such-and-such, *she's* got a real bent for drawing; and as for Susan (*she's* had infantile paralysis, you know) *she's* quite one of our star turns. . . ." These are European children debarred by some disability from going to boarding schools—illness, expense, distance—or children whose parents prefer to tackle at home the first stages of education.

The founders of the course were women teachers who married and

## TANGANYIKA

came to Dar es Salaam; seeing the need, they thought out a way to fill it and sold the idea to the Education department. Now their successors toil all day in a dark and rather dreary basement to teach children they never see; no one makes money out of it, but many European children owe their chance in life to the skilled direction of their floundering parents by these industrious ladies.

"One of our original pupils has just won a scholarship to Oxford," they said, beaming. "We feel very pleased."

### MINAKI

Europeans in Africa come and go so cursorily that few achieve a lasting reputation, unless for oddity. Among the exceptions are the two missionaries who have built up at Minaki a secondary school, a teacher-training college and a hospital, all standing together amid a range of low-lying hills about 15 miles from Dar es Salaam, and comprising a sort of village of dark ochre-red buildings arranged around quadrangles and shaded by trees. They were built on the cheap; arrow-slits like those in a medieval castle save the expense of dormitory windows, some of the school desks still in use came 25 years ago from the parent mission in Zanzibar, much else is old and dilapidated.

Minaki does not consist of buildings, however: it consists of a spirit. The conditions of the Universities Mission to Central Africa are exacting. Its staff receive no salaries, comforts are meagre, luxuries nil, celibacy is expected, the work is hard. Nor does the Mission pamper its Africans; the boys must work and obey; but a woman who has carried her sick baby a day's journey over the hills can always be squeezed into an over-crowded ward. And the wards always are over-crowded. Although Government hospitals are better staffed and equipped, sick Africans will often walk a long way to reach Minaki rather than travel a shorter distance to a more modern but less charitable place.

"I believe our popularity is partly due to the absence of surgery. We used to have visiting surgeons, and then half our patients vanished into the bush. Now we send cases where surgery's inescapable down to Dar es Salaam. People know they won't be cut up here, and that gives them confidence."

So said Dr. Gibbons, a brisk, grey-haired Devonian who has kept intact in this humid, malarious climate all her vigour and humanity, the only doctor at this hospital of 165 beds plus a maternity wing. (She is helped by two newly-recruited English Sisters.) It is a twenty-

## 'EDUCATED WITCHDOCTORS'

four hour job. On top of it, she trains medical assistants who will man the bush dispensaries on which the improved health of the ordinary African must so heavily depend. This involves not only a thorough four years' grounding in medical science, but also the moulding of character; for it is just as important to turn out a young man who will resist the inclination to charge a shilling for an injection of water, as an expert on the Pharmacopœia. Just as important, and far more difficult.

As Dr. Sneath, the Canadian Director of Medical Services, remarked:

"An African alone in his district faces a strong temptation to turn into an educated witchdoctor and cure with medicines, instead of getting down to root causes—hygiene, sanitation, diet. There's a strong tendency to sink back into the original social outlook."

And consider the temptation! He has drawn away from his fellows, he stands, as he thinks, on a pinnacle, always looking down on those with lower standards and never up towards greater men—a most corrupting situation. The beliefs of those around him draw him down, gradually, quietly, like a gentle quicksand; but if he reverts he cannot again put on the virtues of simplicity, for opportunities to exploit his new knowledge are too great. Those few Africans who, in spite of all that is stacked up against them, have held their standards whole, surely deserve our respect.

To turn out men of that kind is Minaki's object. What the Mission is chiefly up against is the African's own character, moulded for him by centuries of an existence at once easy and enervating, where individual effort is discouraged by society, and brings few rewards. This environment has produced a human being with many virtues: good-mannered, hospitable, generous, friendly; but at heart, when faced with a struggle, soft and easily defeated, morally corruptible, unwilling to stand up against his fellows.

"It is very rare," said Canon Gibbons, "to find an African willing to make trouble for himself for the sake of a principle."

The two Gibbons have succeeded in instilling a sufficiency of these qualities into a sufficient number of youths to make their pupils sought after in all parts of the Territory. Their secret, I believe, resides in the respect which every boy feels for his master. In the quietest possible way this tall, hawk-like, forthright priest, with the face of an ascetic, has established over them a strong personal ascendancy. One could sense it in the way the boys spoke to him, in their alertness, in the way they ran to do his bidding and came back with a grin on their faces. To him they use the old Swahili greeting, *shikamu*, reserved for

## TANGANYIKA

superiors and now all but extinct. He is never soft with them—far from it, he is a disciplinarian; but they see in him, and in his wife the doctor, a rare example of two people of strong character and intelligent minds who live and work for others with good humour and no cant, and who spend no part of their talents on personal gain; and to this, so much more than to exhortation, they respond.

“A fundamental mistake was made when the Government fixed the scale of pay for clerks higher than that for artisans.”

We sat, in the sultry thunder-heat, in a room lined with books that had been read and re-read and lent to others; rugs and chair-covers were threadbare and torn, every desk and cranny was stacked with journals, reports, examination papers, letters.

“As a result,” continued Canon Gibbons, “the ideal became the collar-and-tie man who sits in an office and takes no responsibility, and despises work with his hands.” And the craftsman, the man who learns the pride of work and the need of self-discipline, he has not appeared, or but rarely; and education has succeeded only in severing from their roots the chosen few who receive it and teaching them to look down on their fellows. “We are hatching out a generation of clerks!” His tone was biting; he does not mince words.

How often one hears the same story: and always from those who live their lives among Africans and know them as they know their own children, not from those who, in remote offices, draw up schedules and calculate percentages.

A sidelight comes from the hospital, where beri-beri is a common complaint. (So are bilharzia, hookworm, venereal diseases, yaws, malnutrition and tropical ulcers; here the sufferers are cured and sent forth only to become reinfected, sometimes within a few weeks, for lack of the simple hygiene and habit that would put an end to most of the diseases.) Fresh fruit prevents beri-beri, and in this fertile tropical country you have but to spit out a pawpaw seed for a tree to sprout. For years, now, agricultural instructors, Minaki school and Dr. Gibbons have been plugging away, with the persistency of dance-band leaders, the theme-song of fruit-tree planting. There must be few Africans to whom the idea is strange, yet fruit-trees are still rare and beri-beri still common.

It is our weakness, no doubt, to expect results too quickly. In the maternity ward I spoke to a slim young girl, her crinkly hair parted in neat rows, nursing with a Madonna-like serenity her newborn baby, while the father, a white-coated hospital dresser, stood proudly by. Here was the new African, the future's hope. Perhaps that baby will

## DISCOVERY OF PALUDRINE

grow up to plant fruit-trees, dig pit latrines to stop hookworm,<sup>1</sup> and do a full day's work. Meanwhile Minaki continues to preach to seemingly deaf ears the doctrine that a healthy body is the meet habitation for a pilgrim soul.

## KONGWA

Passenger trains leave 'Dar' for up-country twice a week. Under persuasion, the railway will sometimes hitch 'Galloping Dick' on to a goods train, supply you with a camp bed and kitchen and leave you to it. Galloping Dick, they say, has square wheels: he has also a little cage under the step for live chickens. One feels as if one was setting out in a covered wagon.

I shared Galloping Dick with Mr. Tranter (a homing Legislative Councillor) and a malariologist going to inspect experiments, on the Councillor's sisal estate, on the efficacy of Paludrine. Its invention, the outcome of brilliant and sustained research by I.C.I. chemists, may turn out to be one of the landmarks of African history. Throughout the greater part of this continent no man, woman or child escapes malaria, which, though it seldom kills outright, at all points blunts the edge of well-being.

The sixteenth century Jesuit priest who brought to Europe the secret of cinchona was one of the true founders of all European empires in the East. Without quinine the European perishes; and Africans, throughout these territories, can buy tablets at all post offices for a nominal sum far below their cost. But the protection which quinine affords is incomplete and sometimes the drug is harmful.

Now comes Paludrine. It attacks the malaria parasite at a stage in its life-cycle hitherto invulnerable and is said never to fail except with one kind of malaria, benign subtertary, an evil but uncommon form. My travelling companion is testing the drug on groups of labourers, drawn from 36 different tribes, on Mr. Tranter's estate.

Mr. Tranter is another sisal baron, but a mild and genial one, with a benevolent curiosity about the lives of his labourers. Sometimes, of an evening, he strays into their quarters and tells them Nordic fairy stories; they respond with the fables that all Africans relish. Most of these have an Aesop-like humour and are concerned with the animal world. Of their many riddles, he gave me this example:

"How can you stop a cock crowing at five in the morning on a Sunday?"

<sup>1</sup>Hookworm spreads by means of eggs which pass out in the excreta, and can therefore be checked by proper sanitation.

## TANGANYIKA

"Slit its throat the night before!"

About midnight when Galloping Dick, rocked by gargantuan pantings, paused for breath, the baron and the malariologist dropped off the stern into an immense blackness which they said concealed a station, and vanished into the night.

The train was due next day at Gulwe soon after eleven and arrived at four o'clock. At Morogoro we had passed the Uluguru Mountains towering above the line with harsh granite facings and, round Kilosa, steep red sandstone hills covered with dense bush. The pale green landscape was stabbed now and then by a flash of red, the red of a bottle-brush flowering among the scrub, or a scarlet-breasted shrike.

The line wound thinly through a landscape savage and deserted, except round those two old German settlements, where grey-green sisal sliced into the endless bush or a white house on a hillside marked the finger-hold of the European. The mere size of the landscape is something impossible to convey in words, by photography or, I should imagine, even by painting; but then no first-rate painter has tried. The strange hard shapes of the hills, the speckled look of the bush, the huge hidden geometry, need a Cézanne to do them justice.

A white-plastered German-built office and a flat, gravelled place beside the line marks Gulwe station, which has sprung into sudden fame as the temporary jumping-off place for the groundnut camp lying about twenty miles north.

In Dar es Salaam I had been told apologetically: "I'm afraid the groundnutters will only give you a tent in the mud." And then the well-meant but chilling rider: "There's nothing to see there, you know. You can get all the *facts* in Dar es Salaam. . . ."

So I arrived, by jeep, prepared to rough it in darkest Africa, to find myself ushered to a tent, it is true, but one about the size of a village hall and with a cemented floor. And no mud, but limousine transport to the mess-tent about three hundred yards away, and the jovial hospitality of the staff of the United Africa Company, in charge (as Managing Agents) of the British Government's bold project to overcome, at least in part, the world shortage of fats by replacing millions of acres of virgin bush with groundnuts.

It was dusk when I arrived, and after dark the whole European contingent, between sixty and seventy men, gathered in the open to eat sausage-and-mash and drink beer by the light of hurricane lamps.

A thin wail of dance music from a portable gramophone ascended to the stars; but after supper the men drifted into clusters and sang sea-shanties and the old familiar English songs, and the feel of an army

## THE GROUNDNUT CAMP

encampment was in the air. These are the men who are to push down 3,000,000 acres of vegetation, wipe it literally out of existence—bush that, I suppose, has grown here since Africa took on its present shape.

At the moment they are horseless riders, for their machines have not arrived. Bulldozers have been ordered from the ends of the earth; someone even flew to the Philippines to snap up a batch that had been reported on offer there; but the icy English winter, the coal crisis, shipping troubles, the Mombasa strike, all have combined to delay the machinery.

Tanganyika distresses these up-to-date engineers.

"Not a mile of bituminous road in the whole country! Not a single mile! The roads—you can't call them roads, they're enough to make a fellow burst out crying. As for the railway . . ." Words failed.

The boss of the outfit is a big, burly, quiet-spoken and highly efficient man whose normal job is manager of all the United Africa Company's plantations. But this is not a U.A.C. enterprise. That company (a subsidiary of Unilever's) acts merely as the agency to start things going; it has no money in the groundnut scheme and draws none out.<sup>1</sup> All the capital—£25,000,000 is the estimate, but this will be greatly exceeded—is to come from the British taxpayer, whose returns will be paid in margarine.

It is cool here, after the mugginess of Dar es Salaam. We are up on the inland plateau, about 4,000 feet high—in the real East Africa, with dry air and crisp nights, and the rocks and dry grass and flat-topped thorn trees, and a late moon rising slowly to join the starry myriads over the smooth-crested hills.

Behind the camp rises a range of hills laced with bush and thorn trees, with here and there an outcrop of gneiss showing through. In the early morning a white mist clung to their flanks and hid their crest from view. The mist lay on the tops of the thorn trees, lit from above by the mild rays of a sun climbing like a young golden eagle into a sky clear and void above the fleecy curtain. Every twig, every leaf-blade glistened where the sun touched it, but under the mist all was moist and still. The tall sorghum, growing in patches, hung down heavy grain-filled heads, its broad leaves filmed with moisture.

A slim young herdsman driving his father's cattle out to pasture led me to his homestead, which merged into the landscape as naturally as a

<sup>1</sup>On April 1st, 1948, the United Africa Company handed over its temporary management to the Government-created and financed Overseas Food Corporation.



## TANGANYIKA

leopard. A narrow opening, blocked at night by thorns, allowed access to a cattle boma surrounded on four sides of a square by a building so low that I had to bend almost double to enter and, once inside, could not stand upright. The flat roof was made of sods. On it the grass was shooting, and this conferred a perfect camouflage.

The huts can stand no higher because the poles of which they are built will grow no longer in this stern environment; and they cannot be thatched, because grass never grows long enough for thatching. This is a dry country, dry and hard, and life is pared down to the fundamentals. The people are the Wagogo, primitive cattle-owners scattered over an enormous stretch of the Central Province. They look light-boned and puny, and their cattle are smaller than English donkeys.

It is to the edge of their country, at the foot of the Segara hills, that the groundnut camp has come. From a mild elevation on the flanks of these hills we looked down over the mighty rolling plain ear-marked for the groundnut invasion. Covered with bush, it has the appearance of a dark ocean and from it, here and there, rise promontories and rocky islands to stress by their interruptions the immensity of the steppe. I suppose this bush-clad rolling country, broken now and again by low ranges, goes on for the best part of four hundred miles before dropping gently to embrace the Lake. Most of it is uninhabited and perhaps never even walked over, certainly by anyone interested in groundnuts; the terrain was selected from the air.

It is easy to see, at close quarters, why this was so. Parts of the bush are literally impenetrable, except with the aid of knives and axes. Not all is as thick as this, but a good deal is, and you could realise, after seeing it, that mechanisation is the essence of the business. It would take a lifetime, and an army of men, to clear the bush by hand.

The outstanding fact is that no one really knows what will emerge from that ocean of thorns: health or sickness, fertility or desert, good soil or bad. And, most important of all, water or no water. For it is lack of water that has made all this land a wilderness. There are no rivers, no springs, no wells.

Can the groundnutters find water? They believe it is to be had for the boring, and at no great depth. How much can you take from boreholes without lowering the water-table? That is a vital point on which too little is known. Much can be done by dam-building, once you can see the lie of the land. On these, as on so many other matters, the groundnutters are groping in the dark; but from the start they are consulting scientists. A soil chemist and a conservation expert from South Africa are installed already in the camp.

## WAGOGO CUSTOMS

On the way back from our exploration of the bush we stopped at the homestead of a Gogo chief. A wrinkled and grinning old head-wife invited me in. Her windowless hut, its mud floor covered with the droppings of goats and fowls, was as dark as a cellar and furnished with a few oxhides for beds. On the floor lay those three stones that, from one side of Africa to the other, make the hob, and the smoke of their fire had coated walls and roof with crusty black. A pot of millet porridge simmered quietly away. In a corner stood the wicker baskets used for storing grain.

Nothing would satisfy the chief's wife but that I should accept a present, for such is the generous custom of her people. Plunging her skinny hands into one of the wicker baskets she pulled out handfuls of provendor and heaped them on to a platter which she carried out to the jeep.

The present consisted of groundnuts. It was nice to know that they do grow in these parts.

Children crowded round the jeep, lost in wonder, and when my companion displayed the engine they could scarcely contain themselves: half ran away, the other half craned forward gingerly, poised for flight. Here people are unsophisticated still—unlike the half-naked, spear-carrying young cattle-herd encountered by the officer in charge of a mobile propaganda unit in a remote corner of Kenya who, contemptuously eyeing the show-piece, a Bren-gun carrier, remarked: "You'd never get away with track-rods set like that in the Fourteenth Army!"

It is strange that this ultra-modern mechanised outfit should have erupted in the midst of one of Africa's most backward peoples. The heart of the M'Gogo lies with his stunted cattle, he is not interested in progress. He does not cry out, as so many do, for schools. He wants chiefly to be left alone, and that is the one boon that he will not be granted. The bulldozer approaches.

Marriage, inheritance, birth, death, revolve round these cattle. The dead are buried sitting upright in the boma, immersed in dung. Cattle bind the community together with ties stronger than steel. If a man receives twenty cows for his daughter's bride-price, two-thirds of these will be due, by immemorial custom, to other members of his family. Gogoland, with its scanty water supplies and thin pastures, is badly over-stocked, and soil erosion is in places appalling; yet exhortations are almost useless so long as men have sons and must secure for them wives by payment of bride-price.

And the people are still steeped in superstition. It is a practice of

## TANGANYIKA

black magic to curse an enemy by surrounding his shamba with pegs endowed by sorcerers with a magic which repels rain. When, in an effort to introduce soil conservation methods, agricultural instructors pegged out contour lines on Gogo shambas, and when this was followed by the 1946 drought, the people naturally assumed a wholesale practice of black magic by the Government and offered sullen resistance to all forms of propaganda. In such minds suspicions thrive, and it was not perhaps surprising that when the U.A.C. hoisted its house flag rumours should have flown round that the country had been handed over to the Italians. When these fears were allayed a few Wagogo, tempted by the hot dinners, signed on to work for the groundnutters. Others followed, and now there are several hundred living in tents like their employers, learning to make bricks and use a pick, and probably eating square meals for the first time in their lives.

They do not make 'good labour'. My companion, the trim and efficient manager of a big U.A.C. plantation in the Cameroons, was dismayed by the inefficiency and slackness of the East African. As for skilled and semi-skilled artisans and clerks, such as are to be found in abundance on what is called here 'the other side', they scarcely exist. In particular the lack of good accountants and clerks (as distinct from very bad ones) is holding up the organisation, and there is talk of bringing over trained Nigerians and Gold Coasters.<sup>1</sup>

Near the newly-levelled airfield we passed a little camp, if you could so call it: just a tarpaulin slung over the branch of a thorn tree with a camp bed under it, a fire, a saucepan and a native *toto*. Here lives one of East Africa's old stagers, a rolling stone who has wandered about Tanganyika for a quarter of a century, doing a bit of hunting and a bit of trading, and is now engaged to shoot rhino for the groundnutters. (He is said to be one of the few Europeans at home in the Gogo tongue.)

"Fancy a white man living like that! How could Africans have any respect? Disgusting!"

My companion spoke in the same shocked tones as the engineer who had looked in vain for bituminous roads. East Africa, I fear, comes off badly in comparison with 'the other side'.

A ring-master in white shorts and dark glasses stood in the middle brandishing a fly-whisk and looking exactly like a lion-tamer, even to the twirling black moustachios. But the D7 tractors behaved more like elephants than lions. They prodded at sizeable acacias and, with-

<sup>1</sup>A plane-load of about twenty of such men has since been flown over.

## PEASANT FARMING AND THE MODERN STATE

drawing for a slight run, pushed them gently over; then, wheeling with an agile dignity, they scooped up the bush with their snout-like scrapers and laid it neatly in rows. The ground where they had passed was shorn as clean as a sheep's back. One almost expected them to kneel down with their scrapers on a step to end the act.

It is reckoned that these beasts will clear an acre an hour, and work a ten-hour shift. At present their drivers are British mechanics, but African ex-soldiers are to replace them. When hundreds are at work together the bush will melt away; only boobabs, standing dumpily upright on their thick purple-tinted trunks, resist assault. The roots are to be torn out by rippers.<sup>1</sup>

These three tractors, a vanguard of 300, were clearing a path for a short branch railway. We strolled across to railhead, where the lines ended abruptly in the sand, for a welcome cup of tea with the young surveyor in charge of the job and his even younger wife.

Their coach, hot as an oven, contained one couch, two chairs and no lockers or cupboards. Four people squeezed in with difficulty. Within a month of her arrival the surveyor's wife had been struck down by a combined attack of typhoid and malaria. She found herself, cut off by heavy rain, a hundred miles south of the main line alone in a stifling tent—her husband was out from dawn to dusk at his surveying—without any medical aid and unable to speak a word of the language. She survived to reach hospital at Dodoma and, with youth's resilience, to recover. Pioneering is not yet over and done with in Tanganyika.

That night, after an excellent dinner, the men who believe in this scheme, and one of the three who framed it, discussed its future. For the groundnut project is a great deal more than a method of getting fats from a sterling area to a ration-bound Britain, or a way to make the wilderness productive, although it is both of these. It is a pointer to a new way of life for the peasant and his wife with his hookworm and her hoe.

Ever since British rule in these parts began, the rulers have struggled along on the theory that the way of life evolved by its native inhabitants, which is basically the way of the ignorant peasant without effective tools who has not mastered his environment, can be slowly changed for the better without disrupting it—built on to and remodelled without cracking the foundations.

This theory is perhaps not as sentimental as it sounds. Indirect rule was a political expression of it. And those who believe that slow growth and gradual change are as necessary to the sound rebuilding of a

<sup>1</sup>That was the idea. They have since proved far more intractable than had been expected.

## TANGANYIKA

society as to the proper growth of a tree, may prove to be right in the end.

The rest of the world, meanwhile, has been hurrying at breakneck speed away from such conceptions. It is becoming clear as daylight that a modern state, with its expensive social services, can no more be built on a basis of peasant agriculture than a skyscraper could be built of mud blocks on a potato patch.

Yet the custom of the peasant has proved as unyielding as the gneiss under the surface of his African hills. We have beaten our hands against it and left it almost undented. Now a charge of dynamite is being prepared, and from the chunks of debris which will follow its ignition we shall have to shape a new society.

It would be wrong to exaggerate. The groundnut scheme is not going to convert 13,000,000 East African peasants into mechanised *kolkoi* technicians. The estimates call for only 7,500 skilled Africans in employment when the scheme is full-blown. And even the 3,750 square miles of anticipated groundnuts is a tiny fraction of Tanganyika's 360,000 square miles. Most of the people and most of the acres will go on as before, peasant-wise, at first ignoring bulldozers and decorticators as the dugout canoe ignores the flying boat. Yet they will be affected.

If the plan succeeds, in this wilderness will arise new towns and villages filled with men of all tribes who will live here with their wives and families divorced from their chiefs and shambas, inhabiting hygienic houses, seeking their recreation in the cinema and the social centre, going to the dispensary and the church instead of to the tribal witchdoctor and the rainmaker. The groundnutters mean to span in a single leap the distance that separates the untutored tribesman from the trade unionist.

Will they do it? If not in this generation, they say, then in the next. They intend to breed their own type of *homo industrialensis*. For their clerks and tractor-drivers will have children, and these children will be de-wormed, fed on Paludrine and sent to school, and in the schools the transmutation will be effected. When they have come to man's estate, healthy, instructed and versed in co-operation, they will come into the groundnut inheritance, with its 3,000,000 acres of cultivation, its fleets of tractors and implements, its laboratories and hospitals, its workshops and schools, its network of transport and its ties with world-wide markets. In such a society tribalism, peasantry, superstition, indirect rule, all will have atrophied and died, and the New African will inherit a new earth.

## THE VIRTUES OF NATIONALISM

That is the vision cherished by one at least of the plan's makers and managers, formerly Director of Agriculture here.

"I believe in nationalism," said Mr. Wakefield. "I've seen it in the West Indies, how nationalism can spread incentive and drive into every little village and farm, where for centuries the people have been ill-nourished, riddled with disease and without hope. For twenty years I believed in peasant agriculture and worked to uphold and improve it, and the West Indies taught me that I was wrong.

"What are we doing in Africa to-day? Educating the people to despise their lot and to aspire to something better, and then tying them to a system which prevents them from satisfying their desires. There's only one answer to that: discontent, and one day revolution. We must give up clinging to the old ways for fear of disrupting tribal society. It's falling apart already. We must plunge boldly into the methods of the future; mechanisation, scientific production, collective farming—with co-operation as the goal."

Can this be done? Can Africans, moulded by their environment and by the flowing centuries to a shape which has scarcely changed for millennia, be brought within a single generation to the control of so complex and so mechanised a Western concern?

"Look at the Chagga! If they can succeed with co-operation, why can't a new pan-African generation succeed here?"

This most atypical ex-official believes passionately in his vision. Some of the scheme's directors and managers, some of the District Officers and schoolmasters, are more sceptical.

On the way back to Gulwe, along a track thickly edged with the purple and white blossoms of *ipomea*, three tall skin-clad Masai warriors stood aside to let us pass, looking superb and archaic, as Masai do. Each carried his long-bladed spear and his club tucked into the belt, each wore his hair in a matted red peruke. They looked haughty, wild and appropriate to this spare and empty land, like an antelope poised for the single bound that will dissolve its outline in the bush.

A little further on a M'Gogo, half the Masai's stature, waved a calabash of eggs at the jeep—five eggs for a penny. Both are sights that will not be seen in a few years' time along this track.

## MPWAPWA

Everything is green after rain—the hills, the trees, even the veld. Acacias are hung with clusters of delicate, creamy, sweet-smelling flowers. Greenest of all is a little valley cupped by hills where star-

## TANGANYIKA

grass grows so thickly that it clutches at your ankles. Star-grass (*cynodon* spp.) is perhaps the best pasturage in eastern Africa.

This valley is the pride of the Veterinary department, whose headquarters are here at Mpwapwa in the hills beside the Central Line. Before they took it over it was just a valley like any other, sandy, bleached and bare under a loose sprinkling of bush and thorn. The goats and scruffy little cattle of the Wagogo picked a bare living off such tufty grasses as resisted an annual seven-months' drought (and drought in Africa means drought—no rain at all) and the searing fires. To-day, a herd of improved native cattle, fat and high-yielding, graze the thickly clothed paddocks which do better than the traditional English 'three acres and a cow'.

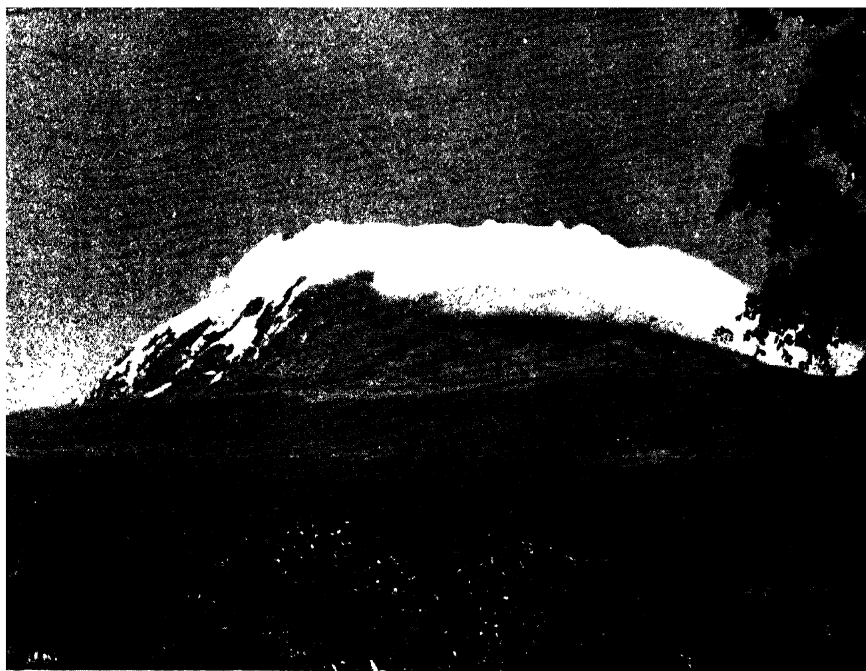
This looks like a miracle, but the art of pasture improvement has brought it about. The vets paddocked this valley (one sees hedges here: the dark, coarse branches of a kind of euphorbia called *manyara*), planted star-grass and put in cattle to graze it. In the dry weather they gave the cows silage and cake, and dung so enriched the soil with humus, and star-grass roots so improved its capacity to absorb moisture, that soon the fields were yielding enormous crops of grass and, what is more, keeping green most of the year round.

For stock farming, indeed any farming, in this country boils down to a struggle to trap and hold the scanty and badly distributed rainfall, and to fight drought. In his back garden the keen young pasture research officer, a newcomer from South Africa, conducts a revealing experiment on the capacities of maize, grass and the native bush to hold the precious rainfall.

He has found that 18 gallons of rain-water rushes off a maize shamba for every one gallon that trickles off grass. As for bush: he measured the depth to which the moisture had penetrated immediately after the rains. Under grass it had gone down about five feet, under the ordinary native bush 18 inches. Bush cover is, in native agriculture, the only normal method of soil regeneration. These experiments show it to be a poor and even a dangerous method compared with a grass ley.

The superior virtues of grass, both as a rainfall-preserver and as a soil-restorer, over crops and over most other forms of vegetation is, I suppose, pretty well accepted by now; the question is, how to make Africans practise what scientists preach.

Tanganyika has about 6,000,000 cattle, nearly all at the lowest ebb of productivity. Were tsetse-fly to be conquered and livestock improved, it could become one of the great cattle-raising countries of the



Kilimanjaro

Sukumaland, near Ukiriguru







The Bismarck Rocks, Mwanza

A tea-shop in Dar es Salaam



## WAGOGO GHEE-POSTS

world, comparable with Queensland and Texas on a larger scale. Yet until a year ago this laboratory, the only place of research, had one solitary officer.

"I did everything from extracting native teeth to mending boilers," he said. In addition he studied rinderpest immunity, East Coast fever, tuberculosis, contagious abortion, 'the transmission of human trypanosomiasis in the bovine'—in other words, whether cattle can carry sleeping sickness—and a few other things.

Now he is studying East Coast fever. Recently the ticks which carry this infection have startled the veterinary world by beginning to show immunity to arsenic. This, by destroying the efficacy of dips, might put everyone back half a century and make stock improvement almost impossible; but in the nick of time has come the discovery of gammexane. This synthetic compound may replace arsenic in dips, but much more must first be found out—for instance, how to make it stick to the hairs of the cattle; and the Mwapwa staff, now reinforced by two more scientists, is at work on this, as well as on many other matters.

A jug of excellent cream had appeared on the groundnutters' dinner-table, obtained from a nearby ghee-post. These are projects of the Veterinary department, set up to put the Wagogo in the way of earning a little cash.

A cattle-owner, or more likely his wife, brings in the milk and waits while the man in charge separates it and gives back the skim for home consumption. Then the ghee—clarified butter—is made and Indians collect it by lorry; a small profit goes to the Native Treasury.

The Wagogo have little use for money, and 'encouragement' had at first to take the form of downright compulsion. After about three years compulsion was lifted and now, although the quantity of milk brought in has fallen by about one-third, the ghee-posts are well enough supported to allow of their continuance.

It seemed a good idea to put the headquarters of the Veterinary department here at Mwapwa, up in the hills, rather than down on the sweltering, tsetse-infested coast. But the director remarked gloomily:

"Yes, except that we're so cut off from other departments."

"There's the telephone. . . ."

"You never get a call through to Dar on the same day that you book it!"

The train was due at Gulwe around midnight. The platform was dark with the huddled forms of passengers, their heads under their

## TANGANYIKA

blankets, still as logs on the unyielding gravel. The bare rest-house reverberated with the snores of two Greeks and the whirring of a host of bats. Just before dawn, heralded by much bell-ringing, the mail-train arrived.

### GULWE-TABORA

All morning we ran through bush, bush, bush: a most monotonous landscape, broken sometimes by an abrupt granitic hill rising without kindliness but with a sort of spare grandeur out of this spiky sea. Under a bleak and formless canopy, patches of sandy soil showed through, and beside the line we could see runnels scoured out by run-off from the low embankment. There is little grass under the bush. Clearly a country made for erosion, and one badly eroded.

At Dodoma a fleet of buses stood beside the station, ready to carry passengers southward to Iringa and the distant Southern Highlands. There, forest and upland, stream and range, crisp mornings and cold nights, put the traveller in mind of the Kenya highlands, and indeed at one time, before the world slump, Kenya settlers attempted to colonise this empty land; but two or three hundred miles of road transport, and costly road transport at that, is more than any normal crop can stand, and of the big venturers all withdrew save Lord Chesham, with his 100,000 acres, his bacon factory, his club and his persistent dreams of a new British settlement.

"The Southern Highlands are crying out for development," said one of my train companions, himself a settler south of Iringa. "There's a market for bacon, a creamery, and I do all right myself out of sun-flower seed. We could offer hundreds of ex-Service men good land and a start in life. In the last few months I've had over thirty inquiries myself, and mostly from men who'd make ideal citizens—young, keen, anxious to do a hard day's work. I've had to tell them all the same thing; nothing doing, because the Government won't play. Land? Masses of it, empty—and no good to the natives, it's too cold for them. Much of it's ex-enemy property. But these young men are going away in disgust, driven away—yet they're just the sort of citizens any country would scramble to get!"

I had heard the same story in Dar es Salaam, and had been round to the 'appropriate department' to ask for facts. These must be seen against a statement from the Colonial Secretary in London that the Tanganyika Government wishes to encourage a limited amount of European settlement provided that native rights are not encroached upon. In fact there is a Land Settlement Board to select suitable areas

## OFFICIAL POLICY AND WHITE SETTLEMENT

and supervise the new settlement that the Government wishes to encourage.

How many new settlers have been provided for in the two years since the war ended? The answer is—none.

"Some land has been leased out," I was told by the responsible official, "but practically all in the form of extensions to existing estates, mainly sisal, and all on one-year leases."

"Then how about encouraging settlement. . .?"

"Everything is held up pending a United Nations decision on the future of German lands. And all the money we receive must be paid into the International Allied Reparations Pool. Until they decide their policy on the international level, we can take no action here."

The Tanganyika Government has found the perfect cover for prolonged bureaucratic sloth.

"What happens when an intending settler applies for land?"

"We record his application."

"And is he given any decision?"

"No—not yet."

"And is he told when he *will* get a decision?"

"Well, we are not in a position here. . . ."

No wonder, as my train acquaintance said, that he goes north to Kenya or south to Rhodesia where properly organised settlement schemes are in working order, while German farms, once so well kempt, revert to bush or are taken over on one-year leases by town-dwelling Indians or Greeks as lemons to be squeezed dry.

This hold-up pending an international decision applies only to land taken over from the Germans—about 810 square miles out of Tanganyika's 360,000 square miles. The total area leased to non-natives, or owned by them, amounts to 2,882 square miles, or about 0.8 per cent of the whole territory.

How about fresh land, not previously the property of Germans?

"All our schemes for new settlers concern *ex-enemy* land," I was told, "except for one minor project, involving about thirty small farms."

In other words, no serious attempt has been made to find new land, land other than that already in the hands of the Custodian of Enemy Property. The utmost care, of course, has to be taken not to infringe native rights.

"I could show you land where you can go for miles and miles and not see a native hut," said my train companion, "land lying idle, unoccupied, useless. Yet the territory's broke and the world is crying out

## TANGANYIKA

for food. White settlement there would help the native by giving him employment where he has none.

"If they'd really wanted more settlers, they could have had several hundred first-class men in line already—including some of their own retired officials. If they don't, why have a Land Settlement Board and several expensive officials on the job, and why keep saying they're in favour of it? Why pay lip-service to one policy and pursue another, or none at all? It's so damned dishonest!"

This farmer, himself a retired administrator, is one of the few who have taken the gamble, willy-nilly, of an annual lease; but there is nothing in its terms to oblige the Government, should it refuse to renew the contract, to pay a penny in compensation for all the capital he is sinking in his farm.

At Itigi station we met a home-going labour gang from the Lupa goldfields. The men carried their worldly goods on their heads in tightly-strapped bundles crowned by battered saucepans. Like all Africans, they wore their garments until nothing remained but a few rags hanging together more by habit than by threads. They crowded round already crowded carriages piling in their bundles, and finally themselves, until one expected to see each influx followed by a spilling out of displaced persons on the other side.

A second gang sat silently on their bundles watching the scene in that attitude of gentle apathy so often assumed, as if the wind had changed suddenly (as one was told in childhood) and fixed them like statues in their instant's pose. Theirs was an outgoing gang on the way to sisal estates, and hailing from the country north of the line towards Singida, where the 'lion men' live.

These men of prey comprise a semi-magical secret society about which little is known, but which crops up from time to time in different parts of East and Central Africa. (The 'leopard men' of the Belgian Congo no doubt have a loose connection.) It is said—I do not know with what truth—that the members, so to speak, of its Singida branch some years ago kidnapped a girl of twelve, broke both her arms and legs and so bound them that she could move only on all fours. They kept her, thereafter, in a dark hut and practised on her the form of hypnotism which is part of their mysteries. When she had lost her own mind and was wholly subservient to theirs, they sent her out by night to attack their victims, whose flesh was always torn by lion-like claw-marks.

In recent months the bodies of over forty victims have been found,

## THE SACRED TREE

most of them murdered by 'lion men', but some possibly by real lions. In such a huge, wild tract of country, with no roads and few police, it is almost impossible to separate fact from heresay, and lions from lion-men. The demented woman, if she exists, has not been discovered; nor will she be, in a land where hyenas can disperse such dangerous evidence in a night. But sixteen arrests have been made.<sup>1</sup>

There is another odd story of the Singida district, told me by a biologist of repute. As befits a scientist he expressed no judgment, but believed it to have been a genuine experience of the D.O. concerned.

One day there came to this officer the sub-chief of an outlying district, in a great state of distress. The sacred tree of his people, he said, had been bewitched, and was lying prostrate. Unless it could be righted, disasters of the most dreadful kind would occur.

The D.O. went off to investigate. In due course the sub-chief led him up to a large boabab. The D.O. blinked and looked again; there was the tree, erect and unharmed. Round it squatted the elders, looking glum.

"What's wrong with your tree?" asked the D.O.

The elders, looking at him in alarm, pointed to the ground.

"There is the tree, fallen on its side. Unless the sorcerer will restore it . . ."

Nothing that the D.O. could say convinced the elders. The tree lay there prostrate, they could see it, they pointed to its outline, but they were too frightened to touch it.

Admitting himself defeated, the D.O. called out the sorcerer and ordered him to recant. But he refused persistently.

"Then I shall hang you from one of the branches. *That* will show them that the tree is upright."

Still the sorcerer was obdurate.

The D.O. flung a rope over a branch of the boabab, fixed a noose round the man's neck and handed the end to two policemen.

"Do you still refuse?"

"Yes."

On a sign from him, the policemen jerked the rope. At the last extremity of the bluff, the sorcerer felt the noose tighten, and gave way.

"I will restore the tree," he said.

Everyone gathered round while he lit a fire, sacrificed a goat and recited his incantations. Then, said the D.O., came the most extra-

<sup>1</sup>Up to May, 1947, 115 'lion' deaths had been reported and 27 Africans convicted. On appeal, ten of these were acquitted and a re-trial ordered of ten others, of whom nine were then acquitted; the seven originally found guilty were hanged.

## TANGANYIKA

ordinary part of the story. The eyes of the company were fixed on the ground where all believed the tree to lie. At the magic word, their glance slowly lifted and their heads tilted back, for all the world like spectators at a tennis match watching a lob, until their eyes rested on the upright boabab. And then there was great rejoicing.

This incident seems to bear a family resemblance to the Indian rope trick. But the illusion was powerless to carry away the European spectator.

"It's the biggest thing we're up against," said the Agricultural Officer. "The constant, quiet, deadly force of fear. It holds back the native from all we tell him and from his own progress. Here's an example."

We were discussing witchcraft and superstition on the long, slow, bumpy journey across the never-ending central plain, conducted at an average speed of fifteen miles an hour.

"One of my instructors," he went on, "left the Government service to settle on his own land. He knew he could do well if he carried out all the things he'd learnt in the department. And he did do well. His crops were two or three times heavier than his neighbours': he became a rich man. Then the local witchdoctor grew jealous. One night, when he had the best part of two years' crops in his granaries, his neighbours burnt down his house, his stores and all his possessions, leaving him destitute. This isn't an isolated case.

"There are plenty of people in my district," the A.O. added, "who know quite well what they ought to do to improve their land and their crops, but don't dare to do it. In a country where arson is the favourite sport the game just isn't worth the candle. The chief may issue orders—but the witchdoctor is often a lot more powerful."

As befits a Scot with a scientific training, this A.O. scoffs at magic, yet can quote from his own experience incidents which leave a question-mark in the mind. "Coincidence, of course—pure coincidence. All the same, it *was* rather odd. . . ."

A tsetse research officer engaged on the clearing of bush had trouble with his labour, and placed two men under arrest pending their charge before a magistrate. One of these was a witchdoctor. He demanded immediate release; when this was refused he said, in effect:

"That is your power over me. I have a greater power. If you do not release me, I shall call out six lions to torment you."

A day or two later, the tsetse officer had occasion to go to Tabora. He camped on the way, and woke in the night to see a lion looking

## A BUSH DEMOCRACY

through the open tent-flap. He shot it just in time. Another lion followed it, and then another; when all was over four lions lay dead and two more had escaped.

A few days later, again in camp, his boys fled in panic from the river-bed where they were digging for water. He found himself confronted by a snarling lion; no sooner had he shot it than another bounded forward; once more, he shot four and two made off. He had never before seen one lion at such close quarters, let alone six, and he never did again.

Such tales wiled away a long day that offered little to the eye. Round Itigi, the eternal bush presented an unusually even, solid, flat appearance, as if it had been scythed off at a fixed level above the ground. Few tall acacias or boobabs reared up above the general level, nor did smaller thorns appear to straggle under the shelter of great ones; here was a perfect social democracy of bush, no tree daring to dwarf his fellows.

The cause of this uniformity lies in an environment so dictatorial that every shrub and tree is forced by the harshness of the struggle to conform to one pattern, and one pattern only. The margin of existence is so slight that no plant can afford to strike out on a line of its own. A little extra height, the ambition to reach closer to the sun, is punished by extermination; poverty's totalitarian hold is complete. Amid the abundance and ingenuity of nature, this Itigi bush is a freak.

Here and there the monotonous drab tone was lit by bands and flecks of colour. Mauve and white convolvulus entwined among the branches, in patches a handsome purple hibiscus drooped its heavy head. In millet shambas close to stations we saw once or twice a spot of bright red, like a bubble of blood attaching to the green head of a plant: the bishop-bird, a kind of scarlet weaver.

At each station, engine-driver and fireman and most of the passengers dismounted to chat with friends while the engine had a leisurely drink; an unbuttoned sort of feeling prevailed and time held tenuous rights in these timeless, hidden places. Our train was in fact running five hours late.

But my agricultural acquaintance began to show signs of stern Scottish impatience. The guard strolled by—a tall, spectacled African with a gentle expression and a crumpled uniform.

"Can you persuade the train to go a bit faster?"

The guard smiled.

"Oh, no, sir. That is for the driver."

"Well, can't you ask the driver?"



## TANGANYIKA

"Oh, no, sir, he does not like to go faster."

"Why not?"

The guard shrugged his shoulder and smiled.

"Well, will you *ask* him?"

The guard looked dubious. "Perhaps, sir."

He must have nerved himself to do so, for the train made up an hour before it reached Tabora.

The compartment next to mine holds the African Legislative Councillor from the Lake Province, returning home with several friends and advisers. Once, as I passed the open door, I heard a voice say in careful English, as if puzzled:

"I do not think the Indian is here *always* for the good of the African. . . ."

'The good of the African', the modern catchphrase—is that to be the sole criterion? It is ours, the one we constantly proclaim and on the whole believe in. It occurred to me then, as it has before, to wonder whether we have done Africans a service by implanting in their minds the fixed notion that everything must be judged by one standard only—whether it is in their own interest. It is one thing to insist that the rights of others should have precedence, but quite another to reiterate that one's own rights are all that count. Yet that is what the African must do when he echoes, as he does, the phrases we have coined, and adopts as his own this tenet, at least, of our teaching.

Let us suppose, for a moment, that we could change places. Would it make us in Britain good world citizens if we were told and told again that 'British interests are always to be paramount', that 'the good of the British must always come first'? It seems more often the duty of our leaders to tell us that the interests of others must be balanced with our own. Yet that is a thing of which the African is never reminded. He can scarcely be blamed for not working it out for himself.

Xenophobia, narrow nationalism, demagogic rabble-rousing: the seeds begin to sprout . . . European weeds all, we sowed and now mulch them with our doctrine of 'the paramountcy of native interests' and 'the good of the African'—doctrines made to restrain ourselves and now, transferred to others, used to inflate conceit and turn selfishness respectable. Soon the sky will be black with chickens coming home to roost. . . .

About midnight we ran into Tabora, the capital of the Western Province and roughly equidistant between the two great lakes.

## NATIVE TREASURIES

### TABORA

The Germans intended to make Tabora their capital. At an altitude of nearly 4,000 feet, in rolling open country, climate and situation are a great deal better than in tucked-away, tropical Dar es Salaam. Here Africa stretches away in all directions, apparently illimitable, bush and then more bush and most of it full of tsetse fly. To the south lie the lead finds of Mpanda, the Rukwa coalfields, and Mbeya highlands with all Rhodesia beyond; to the west and north the most densely populated region of Tanganyika, with gold and diamond mines. Close at hand, the groundnutters plan to open up hundreds of square miles of now quite uninhabited *miombo* bush (so called from the trees that grow there, the haunt of honey-gatherers). Tabora is well sited, but inertia and financial stringency will probably tie the capital to Dar es Salaam.

Tabora is the centre of administration for the Wanyamwezi, a tribe whose physique and fortitude won them fame first as slaves, then as porters on the foot safaris that toiled from the coast to the Great Lakes and back again. The district they occupy is roughly as large as Scotland with a population of about 120,000, and is under the care of a single D.C. and a cadet. It is split up into many small chieftainships, now gathered into four main groups which in turn are federated. Twice a year the leading chiefs meet together to discuss everything from the collection of a tax on muzzle-loaders and the best methods of combating wild pig and baboons, to the low rate of interest on Government investments and the eligibility of sub-chiefs to join a provident fund.

At the *boma*, a clerk keeps the books under the D.C.'s supervision. It is the independence of these native treasuries that is the life-blood of indirect rule. The chiefs control the treasuries, not the Government; they allocate the money and collect the taxes; they discuss and perhaps alter the estimates. Yet the D.C.'s influence, though reticent, is always there. The clerk works under his eye and consults him, and it is his duty to audit the accounts. Most of the money comes from a rebate of one quarter of the annual poll tax. The chiefs collect the whole amount and hand it over to the Government, which returns each chief's share. The rest of the revenue comes mainly from court fees, fines and the sale of licences.

Out of the narrow revenue, means must be found first of all to pay the salaries of the chiefs and their retainers. Then the running expenses of primary schools must be paid, and the cost of dispensaries; money is needed for agricultural instructors, for forestry, for court-rooms and chiefs' houses, for (in this instance) an out-patients' hostel and a fund

## TANGANYIKA

to pay children to pull up the *striga* parasite of maize. Nowadays native treasuries find themselves pushing out tentacles in many new directions. In theory, each peasant saves seed from his own crop, but in practice many eat or sell it all, and find themselves facing a new season with nothing to plant. To mitigate such improvidence, this native treasury now buys seed at the plentiful time, stores it, and sells it for a small profit at the start of the planting season.

There is never enough money to go round, of course, and the hardest thing in the world is to convince the Native Authorities that the Government has no bottomless well into which all might dip, were it not for the D.C.'s pig-headedness and the Governor's parsimony. Counter-suggestions from the official side that chiefs should limit their expenses for the benefit of their people are seldom popular. Recently the courts convicted a chief of raising money for a fictitious war fund. His son was made to pay some of it back, but the Chiefs-in-Council insisted on voting him a pension from public funds.

A few miles out of Tabora, near a mud hut where Livingstone once dwelt, lives the chieftainess of the largest of the four Wanyamwezi divisions, by name Mtemi (meaning Sultan) Mkasiwa Mwana Isike: an old, bony woman with a hard, cold, long face, as adamant and dignified as a cliff-face. Clad in a striped and faded cloth wound round her thin upright body, bare-footed, with a shaven head, she offered no clue to her womanhood; there was a sexless, ancient, frightening quality about her. Conversation was a tiresome matter which she left to her chancellor, Ramadhani Kaniua, a tall, heavy man with all that charm of manner which is an Arab legacy, who in theory speaks her will and in practice administers the district with ability and vigour. Her brother was the notorious Seyyid Saidi Fundikira, who was deposed after embezzling some £15,000 of tax money but never brought to trial, and who now lives in style on a Government pension of £300 a year. Another brother succeeded him; when he died in 1931, his sister was acclaimed at a baraza.

A council of elders assists her. Its members are chosen by her, the chieftainess, and not by the people, for their knowledge of tribal customs; she and her chancellor, not the councillors, wield the real power in the land. She sits in judgment on all cases brought up to her from lower courts and can give up to a year's imprisonment. Before that lizard-like stony stare, one can well imagine a stout heart quailing. Being regarded as a man, she is provided with wives, and if such wives bear her children, everyone is delighted. Her salary, on which she must keep many retainers, is £35 a month.

## THE DILEMMA OF INDIRECT RULE

Here the chiefs, and the chiefs only, dispose of revenues; no election of representatives has been allowed to creep in. Do not the young, educated men, or the ex-soldiers, feel resentful? To this the chancellor replied:

"Most young men who go to school leave the shambas and settle in towns and distant places. They do not stay here to make trouble."

In places that do not so easily shake off their trouble-makers, this failure to absorb the young men accustomed to voice their opinions (as, under tribal custom, young men were not allowed to do) is spoken of as one of the weaknesses of indirect rule. And there are others.

"A good chief must think first of his people." This was a D.C. speaking. "Suppose the Government tells him to get a certain crop planted, for instance, or to supply labour for a railway. The chief must ask himself: 'Will this benefit my people and will they agree?' If the answer is doubtful, he must oppose it. And then Government gets impatient, and writes him off as a reactionary old obstructionist. If he does this too often, he's kicked out, and a more pliant chief put in to replace him. But this new chief may not be able to persuade the people to do what he orders them to do, and then Government turns round and calls him weak and useless."

That perhaps is an extreme picture, but it delineates a dilemma. Is there to be progress or stagnation? Peasants are renowned for conservatism. Push them too quickly, and their obstinacy hardens. Often progress can be had only by the direct imposition of the Government's will—the antithesis of indirect rule. Can we call in custom—the structure of chieftainship—to put custom away? We are trying to build a new world with old tools. Yet an opposite course slides easily into benign dictatorship. Indirect rule, still our official policy—the only policy East Africa has had—respects native tradition, attempts to give dignity to the African by honouring his custom and letting his own leaders make his own decisions.

As usual, we are full of compromise; we can neither let the chiefs alone, or nothing happens—the wrong crops are planted, famines come, land goes literally downhill, men become drunken and idle, welfare centres and dispensaries remain unbuilt—nor can we brush them aside; so, like sheepdogs, we drive and bark and harass the flock.

"They're a docile people," my informant added. "There's a lot left of the slave mentality: good naturedly, they agree to what's demanded; but they're getting a bit browned off. Can you wonder? First came the slump, and we chivvied them into growing crops for export. We made them grow cotton where cotton won't grow and groundnuts

## TANGANYIKA

where groundnuts don't flourish. Then the war came, and we dropped export crops like a hot brick; it was all food production. The high price of maize unbalanced native agriculture and we had to make rules forcing them to plant cassava and millet. Then labour was needed for the sisal plantations, and conscription came in; now railways and groundnuts want men. On top of it all, the Game department persecutes them for killing certain birds and animals, Forestry for cutting the wrong trees, and now it's all soil conservation—planting on contours and not planting on river banks. All very necessary, but—well, it's lucky for us they *are* a docile people."

How docile, he illustrated by a story. One day he met a man coming back with a hoe from a part of the bush that he knew was not normally cultivated.

"What have you been doing over there?"

"Making a shamba, bwana."

"But all your crops will get eaten by baboons!"

"Yes, bwana, I am making shamba for the baboons."

"For the baboons!"

"Yes, there has been a new order from the Government that we are to make shambas for baboons, and then perhaps they will not trouble ours so badly."

"It was little wonder he'd got the thing muddled somewhere," added the D.C. "With such a spate of rules and orders always in flow. Half of them are simply ignored."

Even for Tanganyika, this carries docility rather far. Here, in the back-blocks, are to be found the last strongholds of the old administration: simple, direct, straightforward, non-political, and based on that dying concept, the white man's prestige. Here the D.O. may still be the father of his people, dealing firmly and paternally with family feuds, witchdoctors and cattle-raids rather than with political meetings and town planning disputes.

Sometimes father has to be stern.

"At home they wouldn't believe me when I told them that I had to *beat* people in order to stop them starving," said a D.O. who had for some years administered a remote part of the territory in the far south.

"When I arrived I had to haul people out of the trees and cut their tails off. They crowded round my wife trying to touch her—they'd never seen a white woman before."

This was only a few years ago. "The trouble was, they ate all their grain—or made it into beer. They ran out of food long before the harvest was ready. I suppose they'd done this from time im-

## A WITCHDOCTOR'S CRUEL REMEDY

memorial, and in a poor year they all went short and some of them died. Then the Government came along and put them on famine relief. This suited them down to the ground, of course; but when the war got really tough and drought came on top of it, the Government couldn't find the grain. So orders were issued that everyone must plant a quarter of an acre of cassava, which is drought-resistant. These people simply ignored it. They reckoned that the Government would go on feeding them. But I knew that if they didn't play, they'd starve—literally. So I issued an order—if I came to a man's shamba and he had no cassava, I'd beat him. Fines? They had no money and no stock. As for imprisonment—well—they couldn't have planted cassava in the lock-up. Then I went on safari. I found plenty of shambas without cassava and beat plenty of chaps. But none of them starved."

Officially, of course, nothing is known of all this.

"What would happen if someone complained?"

"Hell to pay, I expect. I should have gone out on my ear. But authority still turns the blind eye occasionally. And they were decent chaps; I didn't want to see them starve."

This was not a Tabora story. My informant here believes, I think, in his heart of hearts that we should let things alone, encourage the chiefs to stand up to us and go no faster than the creeping pace of the people. Who can blame him? He has foot-slogged over thousands of miles in his time, getting to know and love the people and watching them, riddled with disease and superstition it is true, live without fuss or discontent, and with that endearing, happy-go-lucky African cheerfulness, under their own chiefs and according to their own custom. Now he sees tribal discipline failing and the people rootless and adrift, their land deteriorating, drinking far too much and full of venereal disease, leaving their families for the false uneasy life of distant plantation or mine. He feels, under the surface, the ferment of disruption at work and, looking about him—no further perhaps than Egypt or India—can he be blamed for doubting the divinity of this discontent?

He would like to preserve, not destroy, what is sound in tribal custom and in the natural life, at the sacrifice of a little speed. Can this be done without preserving also what is cruel? At the hospital I was told of a young girl, the daughter of the 'enlightened' owner of a model small-holding, who fell sick of a fever. A native practitioner was consulted. "To get the fire out, she must have a fire in her body," was his remedy. The girl was tied down and a fire lit on her chest. It burnt all day. When her ribs were showing they thought her dead and cut open a leg to find out; but the blood still flowed. At that

## TANGANYIKA

stage she was brought into hospital, where she died. Because they were following 'native custom' no action was taken against her torturers.

Between the two extremes of naked tribalism and a kind of progress which destroys without creating, it is hard to find the golden mean.

At this hospital, crowded as all hospitals are, a doctor who has been for twenty years fighting the innumerable diseases of Africa told me:

"I believe my worst enemy is not in the body but in the mind—the power of my rivals. I'm still in competition with the witchdoctor." Hookworm, malaria and venereal disease (this last much on the increase) make up the evil trinity here.

The doctor paused by a bed on which a man slept with his grey blanket drawn up to a hollow face.

"Sleeping sickness," he said. "The acute form. We can do nothing to save him."

There are two forms of this disease: a slow one, caused by the parasite *T. gambiense*, which may go on for years, and this sudden kind caused by *T. rhodesiense*. Both can be cured by injections, but only if these are given before the protozoon has entered the spinal fluid. In the acute form the disease must be diagnosed within a month of infection; after that, there is no remedy.

In some parts of the territory the Government has countered the danger of outbreaks by moving whole sections of the population and 'closing' the infected areas—by retreating, in fact, before the infection-carrying tsetse fly.

The flag over Tabora Government school was flying at half-mast because of the death of the King of Denmark, an event which seemed very remote from the lives of these African schoolboys—the élite of Tanganyika. This is one of the only three schools in the territory to carry their pupils up to the level of School Certificate. Its two senior forms contain about 60 boys of whom less than half, as a rule, pass the Makerere entrance examination.

An output of about 25 boys a year of School Certificate standard from a population of 6,000,000—that is the fact that sets the pace of scholastic progress. It is easy to talk of giving Africans better opportunities in government, in politics, in the professions: here is the well of talent into which all comers must dip their buckets. This year, seven boys from the Government school and two from St. Mary's, its Roman Catholic counterpart, went on to Makerere. This was Tanganyika's total entry.

The Government school was started for the sons of chiefs and dubbed

## THE GOVERNMENT SCHOOL

'the Eton of Tanganyika'. This idea of educating the people's masters did not work in practice. A chief's successor is normally chosen after the chief's death from a legion of sons and nephews, and it was found impossible either to anticipate the elders' choice, or to send all a chief's male issue to Tabora. And many of the likely-seeming heirs proved to be dull at their books and had to be discarded. So, in 1933, Tabora became a plain Government secondary school, using examination results and not position as the test of entry.

In a double-storeyed building arranged round three sides of a courtyard boarders from 30 or 40 different tribes all over Tanganyika gather for enlightenment. The great majority drop out at Standard 10, before reaching the two Makerere classes, either to find jobs or because they cannot take the academic hurdle. None is forced out because he cannot afford it: the nominal fee of £3 a year is not exacted from a poor parent.

Impediments to progress consist mainly in the boys' indifferent English and in a shortage of teachers. English is the medium of instruction after the first two years, and a faulty grounding in the language holds back the pupils all along the line. Until English teaching is improved in the lower schools, teachers despair of raising the standard. Yet in the lower schools, all English teaching is done by Africans who are themselves badly grounded. A vicious circle: how to break it is the major academic problem of to-day.

For some 230 pupils, there is a staff of only four European teachers, including the headmaster. The rest are products of Makerere.

"We are losing touch with the boys. There's too much administrative work, we haven't the time to get to know them." So said the headmaster: from one end of Africa to the other the same protest rises. Makerere turns out good teachers, but when it comes to diffusing Western effulgence, these young men can act only as reflectors.

"You'll find the boys purely materialistic," a woman teacher said as we paused outside a classroom door. " 'Helping their less fortunate fellows' they look on as so much blah. Their main interest is how much money they'll get—very like the boys in the Grammar School classes I used to take in an English industrial town."

The aspirants to Makerere looked trim and clean in their shorts and shirts, barefooted. Some were young men of twenty, others looked like small boys; some were coal-black, others a light brown colour; the variation in type and cast of features was remarkable. Most of them said that they wanted to become doctors. The Medical course at Makerere carries students farthest towards British standards, so



## TANGANYIKA

gathering most prestige, and doctors' posts are the best paid. Very few want to be teachers: the work is too hard and the pay too low. I was surprised at the number who chose agriculture, but one of the staff explained:

"It's a result of the Secretary of State's visit. He was disturbed to find that none of them chose agriculture, and they've been given several pep talks about it since; so now, whenever a visiting European turns up, they think it's the right thing to say."

I have yet to visit a school where a strong undercurrent of scepticism does not exist among the teachers as to their pupils' future. Everywhere one is told the same thing: that the boys' one idea is a soft office job, that most of them dislike responsibility, lack initiative and have been too much spoon-fed. All this is said more in sorrow than in anger, for the teachers are fond of the boys, who on the whole work harder, have nicer manners and are easier to manage than any comparable collection of Europeans.

In another part of Tabora's open, tree-shaded township stands the girls' boarding school. It is about half the size of the boys' school and takes the children, academically, little more than half as far. (No Tanganyika girl has ever sat for School Certificate.) But it has a most pleasant atmosphere. The girls, in simple red check gingham, look clean and healthy and seem beautifully behaved. The tots were making plasticine models of villages and figures which showed both skill and humour, and some of their elders were chalking designs which suggested a remarkable sense of colour and rhythm.

It is little wonder that through the centuries the African woman has been too closely walled in by her fate as a beast of burden and maid-of-all-work to develop a living personality of her own, a free mind; as with the Itigi bush, a stark environment has shaped a forest of women, each separately rooted but all much alike in mental shape and size. That she has managed to preserve enough of personality, like sap latent in the root, to express itself in original design, is a great achievement. At its present stage the object of girls' education needs to be as much to make an individual out of the mass as to pump instruction into a noodle.

Most of these girls come from homes where a book is never seen or a conversation held that is mentally stimulating. When the child journeys to school she passes from one world to another as completely as Alice when she walked through the looking-glass. Education, instead of being one continuous process, goes on at two different levels, and one cancels out the other. This need not always be so. Some of these

## THE LION IN THE NUN'S LAVATORY

girls are the daughters of teachers and clerks who have themselves half-penetrated the looking-glass, and it is in them, and in their future children, that the best hope lies.

To this small school, of less than two hundred pupils, girls come from as far afield as the Rhodesian border, 300 miles away. Their journey is an undertaking, for there is no railway. Last Christmas some of them started off for the holidays by bus and ended, owing to heavy rain, by having to walk over a hundred miles carrying their possessions.

The two top forms are devoted to teacher-training. The girls take well to teaching and are good with children in all ways save one—discipline. In African society the child is seldom corrected, never chastised and generally given in to, and the notion of keeping him up to tasks he is reluctant to perform is the hardest of all to instil. Perhaps it never really sinks in. Yet these children are seldom mischievous.

"If only some of them *would* misbehave," said the headmistress, "I should be happier!"

If they are sheep, they are pleasant ones, with a desire to please and the soft, shy manner less of lambs than of gazelles. They are learning arts as new to them as letters—knitting, needlework, modelling, the care of babies—and it is at these subjects, rather than at arithmetic and history, that they prove most adept.

I had no time to visit the school run by the Roman Catholic Mission—the scene of an event which has conferred on the present Provincial Commissioner of the Western Province the distinction of being, so far as he knows, the only man who has shot a lion in a nun's lavatory.

A nun, in the early morning, found herself unable to push open the door of the privy and, on persisting in her efforts, was considerably startled by a furious roar from within. In this crisis the Mother Superior turned naturally to the Administration, which, rising to the occasion, arrived on the scene in the person of a D.O. with a rifle. Like some knight errant of old, he rescued the nuns from their predicament by dispatching the lion with a fusillade through the door.

## NZEGA

A thread of road runs on through bush like a fragment of melody in the mind—slender, insistent, without end. The landscape is flat and featureless, the bush light and ragged; its anonymity nags at the mind. Hundreds of species compete for life and moisture, and the passer-by has no more idea of their names and characters than of the identity of faces in a crowd. At regular intervals we passed little bays scooped out of the bush and in them a cluster of neat white rondavels, the

## TANGANYIKA

clearing edged with a red-leaved plant: the quarters of P.W.D. road gangs. Without their languid but continuing efforts, in a few seasons the track would vanish like a surface scratch from the healthy man's body.

At Nzega the road fords a river and a settlement appears. A school, a hospital, a few Indian dukas, a D.O.'s bungalow set in its withered would-be garden, an avenue of eucalyptus, a tennis court—such is Nzega, and many small stations like it: lonely, flat and monotonous, but as a rule preferred by its European inhabitants to the larger centres.

"People don't bother you," they say. "You're left to get on with things." And, they often add, this is where you come to know the real African, before the doubting acid of the towns has eaten into his soul.

There is one English woman at Nzega: a nursing sister in solitary charge of the crowded huts which serve as wards, and of the baby clinic. Women walk 15 and 20 miles and more for their lying-in, and some terrible cases reach the hospital, after days of labour and after magic has been tried and failed. Nzega is an isolated spot, 50 miles from the nearest district headquarters.

"Our worst trouble is V.D.," said the sister, echoing many others. Drugs could control and even abolish the infection, were the people so determined. Twelve injections are needed to cure syphilis. After three, when the symptoms disappear, most patients cry off.

"We shall never get to grips with V.D.," the doctors say, "until we have the power, and the means, to keep patients in hospital for the whole of the treatment, and to insist on the treatment of their wives or husbands."

Hookworm, bilharzia and malaria are the recurring and almost universal ailments of the district; and, with all three, every patient discharged as cured is doomed to almost certain reinfection as soon as he gets home.

The doctor in charge of the hospital is a young African, Makerere-trained.

"I've always found him a pleasure to work with," was the sister's verdict. "Considerate, quick, and I can honestly say I've never seen better gynæcological work. And nothing is too much trouble; he really does put the patient first.

The same could be said of this young, fair, English-looking, single-handed sister, on call for twenty-four hours out of the twenty-four. Her assistants are willing enough, but the satisfactory training of African women is a difficulty yet to be solved. 'Wastage' due to early marriage is almost complete. In Western countries we take too much for granted, perhaps, what we owe to the spinster. Africa, by and large,

## DR. AND MRS. MWASELA

is a land without spinsters; and, without spinsters, the children and the sick must lack the care of trained women.

We lunched with Dr. Mwaisela and his wife. It is seldom that one can add the phrase 'and his wife', and therein, I suspect, lies the crux of this problem of relations between the races. Because of the backwardness of women's education, and the prejudice of a society shaped by and for the male, a great gulf separates the African and the European home, and while there is no equality between homes, there must be an element of the artificial and the strained about equality between individuals. So long as Mr. and Mrs. Jones ask Mr. Hamisi (or don't ask him) to dinner, the best intentions in the world cannot always eliminate a flavour of patronage. Things may be different when Mr. and Mrs. Hamisi request the pleasure of the company of Mr. and Mrs. Jones.

And so I think this doctor's success, although rooted in his own ability, has been, as it were, brought to flower by the attainments of his wife, a Jamaican girl of charm, vivacity and intelligence, who reached East Africa in the entourage of a judge. A well-filled bookshelf, a pile of newspapers and magazines, a wireless in the corner—these, more than flowers on the table and rugs on the floor, suggest that here our way of life, such as it is, is lived, not caricatured. And here the D.O. or the vet and their wives can be, and are, invited to dinner.

As for his fellow-Africans, there are none, in such a place, to whom Dr. Mwaisela can talk on equal terms. His own family live in the far south of the territory.

"I'm not lonely," he said. "The Europeans lend me books. I play tennis with them, and my work is always interesting. Nzega is a friendly station."

"And the Indians?"

He shook his head emphatically.

"I never mix with them!"

Dr. Mwaisela's ambition is to study in England. The difficulty is to spare even one doctor, and to pile even one more straw on to the back of the teaching staff in British hospitals.

Two young men were playing *bao* (that universal and incredibly complicated kind of African backgammon) on a bench outside the thatched, white-plastered hall—the social centre, one of the first to be built, with C.D. & W. money, outside the towns. An attendant dozed on an upturned box behind the counter of the canteen. The hall was deserted. Only flies buzzed listlessly in the afternoon heat.

## TANGANYIKA

"Of course, this is the wrong time of the day," the Welfare Officer said. "It's in the evening that the place bucks up. How are the attendances?"

The caretaker, a tall man in a Moslem robe with the stamp of the Arab in his features, answered indifferently:

"Few people come."

He searched for the key of the book-cupboard, found it, and displayed the usual collection of booklets in Swahili and in simple English, scarcely thumbed.

"People in Nzega do not read. The schoolmaster comes, but he takes the books away."

The canteen attendant also shook his head. "Not many people. In the evenings, a few. Perhaps three or four women."

"Why do the women come?"

He shrugged his shoulders. "They are prostitutes."

The Welfare Officer was silent as we drove away, but not surprised. He knew what was wrong. 'Social welfare', in Tanganyika at least, has been a stunt rather than a policy: something applied in a hurry from on top rather than encouraged to grow at a natural pace from the bottom. It seems futile to build halls at Government charges, appoint committees and hope for the best—unless it is considered desirable to provide club life for prostitutes at the British taxpayer's expense.

The inhabitants of Nzega, after all, never asked for a social centre. The committee should surely come before the hall, desire before fulfilment, some local effort be made—and stimulation by local supervisors be given all the time, not in occasional spasms by itinerant strangers.

This seemed to me one more proof, if proof were needed, that to say 'let there be light' in Downing Street or Westminster, Dar es Salaam or Nairobi, does not dispel the darkness shrouding Nzega.

## SHINYANGA

I remember once being impressed by the information that in Kimberley to refuse a drink, when offered one, was an insult so deadly that a fusillade from a six-shooter, or at the very least a punch on the nose, was the conventional riposte. I suppose most children have been enthralled by stories of the penniless orphan Barney Barnato arriving at the diggings with his box of cigars and leaving with goodness knows how many millions; of Cecil Rhodes with his vast dreams and his sick body and his cheque for five million pounds; of the Jews and the remittance men, the trek-wagons and the 'strikes', the drunks and the

bearded Old Testament Boers, and of course the serpentine and scheming I.D.B.s.<sup>1</sup>

And then Shinyanga, the modern Kimberley. How shocked and saddened would be the shades of those raffish, cheroot-smoking and unblushingly capitalistic speculators and prospectors at the sight of this little Indian town, so outwardly prim and sober, so half-awake and so ignored! A new hotel has gone up, and an Indian is building a cinema. (Everywhere in East Africa Indians seem to be building cinemas.) Two young European policemen, sharing a new limousine, have been posted to this previously police-less township, together with an extra D.O.

Outwardly, that is about all the impact which the discovery (in 1940) of the world's largest diamond mine has had on Shinyanga. Yet the Williamson 'strike' has already become a sort of legend, and its perpetrator is passing into African folk-lore.

A bachelor who became immensely rich overnight, he remains elusive, aloof and generally invisible. He never entertains and seldom leaves his mine, nor does he resemble in any other way, so far as a visitor can discover, the traditional prospector. A Canadian geologist trained at McGill, he went about his search in a systematic, scientific way, not in the light of rumours and hunches, and made his find not by luck but through superior skill in his profession. Others had prospected before him over these Sukumaland flats; in fact there is a story that a Government geologist once camped on top of the Williamson 'pipe', and that a heap of earth dug out to make a latrine was found, after the discovery, to harbour a couple of sizeable stones.

It is said that Dr. Williamson has lately refused an offer of £5,000,000 for his concession from de Beers. And no wonder. Over a million pounds' worth of diamonds will be produced in Tanganyika this year, nearly all from Dr. Williamson's 'pipe', and as yet the surface has barely been scratched. The Government takes a 15 per cent royalty, plus a tax of 2/6 a carat to go towards Tanganyika's debt to the East African Cereals Pool for the last few years' import of grain.

We started for the mine along slithery roads and under grey skies, and stuck once in a drift. A few miles from our destination my companion, a young Southern Rhodesian D.O., discovered that he had left his pass behind. This seemed to be serious, and he would have turned back had we not been late already, and enveloped in sinister thunder-clouds. The gate-keepers, he explained, had the very strictest instructions from 'the doctor' himself to admit no unauthorised person,

<sup>1</sup>Illicit diamond buyers.

## TANGANYIKA

on whatever pretext; for, in spite of Shinyanga's respectability, I.D.B.s (mainly Indians) do a brisk business.

Prepared for a brusque rejection, we drove on through a torrent of heavy rain and squelched to a halt outside the gate. A toot on the horn brought a bedraggled figure running; he swung the gate open without any nonsense about passes and in a jiffy was back in his dry, warm shelter, chatting to his friends.

The mine seemed to consist mostly of mud. The term 'mine' is misleading; there is at present no shaft, only a sort of quarry (this is the 'pipe') where a mechanical scoop noses out chunks of black cotton soil and tips them into lorries. Back the lorries plough and slosh to sheds where the soil is washed, and washed again, and the residue sorted on a moving belt by sharp-eyed boys, many of whom, it seems, contrive to swallow the diamonds.

As we drove round the muddy tracks in the manager's car under a lowering sky, a motor-cycle drew alongside and its rider passed a cigarette tin through the window. The manager opened it casually and glanced inside; it contained dull, muddy-looking pebbles.

"The day's takings," he said.

I asked their value. The manager shrugged his shoulders.

"They're flown home and valued in London by the Treasury assayers. We don't get many gems; our biggest so far is one hundred and seventy-four carats. Most of our stuff is industrial, and so greatly in demand." It all seemed very casual, but a day's takings must average in value between £2,000 and £3,000.

Inside the compound are 3,500 men and an unspecified number of wives and families, probably a community of six or seven thousand people. Housing (crude but hygienic), rations (good) medical attention and working clothes are provided by 'the doctor', and so were it not for the compound shop, where goods are sold at cost price, the men would scarcely be able to spend their 17/- monthly wages, except on gambling, for during the term of their contract they are immured within the ring fence—at least in theory; it looked to me easy enough to penetrate.

Mining compounds all the world over seem to possess the drab and forbidding efficiency of the barrack. But to Africans from isolated homesteads in the bush, no doubt they offer a new, eventful world. The work is light, for the scooping and hauling is the job of machines. Men of all tribes have come here—a few have even seeped down from Kenya—attracted by the pay, food and conditions; and the chance of getting away with a stone to be smuggled to an I.D.B. perhaps pro-

## CHIEF KIDAHHA, M.L.C.

vides an extra allurements. But the days of the swallows are numbered. Two police officers have gone to Kimberley to learn the latest methods of detection, and an X-ray is on the water.

Chief Kidaha, the Legislative Councillor, lives close by in a two-storey house built by his father. His people, the Wasukuma, hold their chiefs in high respect, and in return for a feudal obedience expect a feudal devotion to their interests: feeding in times of short commons, intercessions for rain, protection against enemies.

There is nothing feudal in appearance about Chief Kidaha, a modern young man in his early twenties. His father, a grand old man of the tribe, had over forty sons, and nominated Kidaha on his deathbed as his successor. He was acclaimed by the people—the Government were glad of the choice—and recalled from Makerere, where he was a promising student, to his destiny. His bookshelves are full of volumes on economics and it is his ambition to study this subject one day at Oxford; but it is unlikely that he will be able to. Responsibilities too heavy for his years have already been thrust upon him. He was appointed a Legislative Councillor while scarcely settled in as a chief, and the measure of the Government's haste was the measure of their desperate shortage of leaders equipped for the new tasks for which leaders are continually demanded.

Kidaha is the only chief in Tanganyika with even an interrupted higher education. Few except the Makerere-trained find themselves sufficiently at ease in the English tongue to deal faithfully, for instance, with a debate in Legislative Council. Yet a college education is not a substitute for experience nor a guarantee of wisdom—as a Moslen chief pointed out, a man of the old school who had won his knowledge not from books but from experience.

"You Europeans," he said, "bow down to a youth from Makerere as we revere a man who has performed the *haj*."

He might have added that Akbar the Great, uniter of India and patron of art, could neither read nor write.

A tall young man of slight build, vivacious address and charm of manner, he was frank about his difficulties: for example, the wasting of the land by hordes of cattle. A light soil, seven almost rainless months a year, a high wind, the vet's needle—it all adds up to the familiar conundrum. In places near the scanty water, grass roots have perished and dust bowls already appeared. Chief Kidaha (who read agriculture at Makerere) knows the danger and he knows the remedy: his people are obdurate.



## TANGANYIKA

"It is the elders who have the most cattle. It is they who must be the first to destock. But they say: 'Let so-and-so sell his cows, why should I be the first?' I think the old men would rather die than part with their cattle. The problem has become acute."

It is the old story: cattle are needed for bride-price. (For his sister, Kidaha himself received 100 head; even if he had been willing to forego his share, his brothers would not have been.) It is hard to see how destocking can be brought about while bride-price remains the central fact of tribal economics. Meanwhile, Sukumaland is being wasted and blown away, and its capacity to support livestock diminishes.

Chief Kidaha has personal difficulties also.

"It is the tradition of my people that any man can come to the chief's house and be fed. So I must grow crops and store them to feed my people. In return for this, in my father's time, the chief called out every man to work without payment. Now the Government has made that illegal. So sometimes when I am giving judgment in court I say: 'I am not allowed to make you cultivate my shambas, but nor am I obliged by law to feed you. If you wish to be fed at my house, your penalty must be to work in my shamba.'" Nearly always they agree to do so, and in this way the tradition of the chief's bounty survives.

Another tradition demands that he should marry into a certain clan endowed with magical powers of rain-making. Pressure is being put on the chief to take as his second wife (his first was of his own choosing) a girl of this clan, and although there is no religious objection—he is a Moslem—like all young men he objects to dictation in such personal matters. He did not, of course, tell me this, but as we walked out to inspect his shambas he said:

"They still believe that I make the rain. I tell them that's an old-wives' tale, but they smile and say: 'Wise men never tell their secrets.' So what can I do?"

Chief Kidaha rules his part of the tribe without benefit of any council or body on which the ordinary peasants are represented, although he has his traditional council of elders. To my question as to how he kept in touch with the wishes of his people, he replied that anyone could come, by right, to his house for an audience, and that it was a part of his duty to travel round his terrain holding barazas.

"But I don't get out as much as I should like to," he added sadly. "There is too much work—so many papers, so many committees, so many visits to Dar es Salaam."

"We are asking too much of the Native Authorities," said an official. "Take this destocking, and measures to stop soil erosion. We

## 'IF THIS WERE RUSSIA'

persuade the N.A. to introduce the necessary rules. What happens? He introduces the rules, under pressure, but he can't enforce them. Public opinion isn't behind them. So the rules are openly flouted and the damage goes on.

"The best chiefs say to me: 'These rules are your measures, not ours. We personally see the point of them, but most people don't. We can't get them with us. Why don't you give the order yourselves? The people would grumble but they'd obey. Are we to have our houses burnt down because we must harry the people to do the Government's bidding?'"

"They think we shirk our responsibility. They resent having to bear the odium of Government policy. 'Come out into the open and enforce your own rules,' they say. 'We'll support them, but why should we pretend they're ours?' That's their attitude and there's a lot of reason in it."

Chief Kidaha spoke sadly of an order he had made compelling every cultivator to carry out soil conservation works on at least half an acre of his land.

"It is ignored," he said. "But I can't fine or imprison everyone."

Other chiefs are in a like predicament. As a senior official put it, enlarging on the theme I had heard at Tabora:

"Some of the N.A.s are getting very browned off about being Government stooges. Are we prepared to let them go their own way if we believe they're going towards their own damnation? That's something we've never really faced. It's the rock on which indirect rule may founder."

"What do *you* think is the answer?"

He hesitated. "There are lots of things which the N.A.s can and should run without interference. If they make a mess now and then, well, that's the way to learn. But on the few really big and vital issues, such as the land, on which the whole future depends, I think we ought to drop the gloves and go in and govern. And no one would be more relieved than most of the N.A.s."

That, I dare say, sounds a great deal easier than it is. There is roughly one administrative officer for every 10,000 people, and it has yet to be shown that you can apply compulsion in the face of public resistance or apathy without resort to strong-arm methods which, having condemned so roundly in others, we could scarcely use ourselves. "If this were Russia . . ." people sometimes say; and add, not always without a tinge of regret: "Which, of course, it's not."

## TANGANYIKA

Does the answer lie in education? If so, can it be given in the schools?

The basis of the whole system, of course, is the primary school. Perhaps this one at Shinyanga, though better than many, is a fair example. The N.A. and the Government maintain it and not, as is more usual, one of the Missions; most of the 140 pupils are boarders, and nearly all are boys. It takes them from scratch up to Standard VI; from there the few, the very few, who qualify pass on to Tabora. Of its six African teachers, only one speaks English.

The disturbing and serious facts about education are that about half the children who enrol drop out in the first two years of schooling, and that at present only about one child in every seven enrolls.

Like all dependencies, Tanganyika has a ten-year development plan, and education is high on the list. Yet with the best will in the world (and no one under-rates the need) the highest target that can be set is that in ten years' time, fifteen children out of every hundred will receive some schooling. Of these fifteen, only three will climb above Standard VI, with its meagre and fleeting literacy, and only 200 boys from the whole territory will reach the standard needful to qualify for Makerere.

This is an austere horizon, and one hard to lighten. The three greatest obstacles to progress are the dearth of teachers, the country's poverty and the growth of population. There are thought to be about 770,000 children of school-age in the territory; in ten years' time there will be nearly a million. It is like trying to catch up with a train that is always just steaming out of the station.

While everyone worries about numbers, few in authority spare much thought for the quality of education. And indeed it looks as if in that direction little could be done. Teacher-training schools are certainly part of the plan, but who is to teach the teachers? And what are they to be taught?

At present education seems far less a process of initiation into the life of the world (as it was, within its narrow limits, under the tribal system) as a dreary shuffle towards bare literacy, if that. The black-board, the grammar, the twice-times-table, the kings of England—they are all there, all our own faults and fetishes. What have these bits of dictation, these tattered readers, to do with the life of the peasant? To him they are a sort of magic password into a new priesthood, by no means an instrument to re-shape his old world in the service of his people.

Of course the clerk, the teacher, the accountant are needed—badly needed. But what a price must be paid for the few that are skimmed

## SUGGESTIONS FOR A NEW CURRICULUM

off!—the curdling of the milk below. For every clerk who scrambles into heaven a score of disappointed, blighted little failed-clerks are left behind, and scarcely one skilled and self-respecting craftsman or farmer. Yet on the land and by the land all must live.

What, surely, the youth of Africa needs to learn are these things:

How to farm the land so as to preserve and not destroy it, so that it will yield a richer living rather than a shrinking pittance;

How to improve and widen the life of the village by cleanliness, co-operation, self-help and good fellowship.

That hard work and honesty, however difficult and indeed unfashionable, have been the foundation of all creative societies; you cannot get something for nothing in the end.

That a pride in work is the basis of happiness, and that a country of shoddy unfinished jobs will be a doomed country.

At present, nothing that children learn in secular schools, so far as I know, would impress upon them any of these conclusions.

I remember once entering a small bush-school full of the ragged, woolly-pated little children of peasants miles even from the nearest village, and seeing on the blackboard the following somewhat cryptic sentence: 'Where is your dress for the Court Ball? She answered, I have ordered passion. . . .' The children at Shinyanga had nice manners, and clapped when we entered, and played with gusto in the school band. They were well fed and no doubt happy, and their exercise books were remarkably tidy.

## OLD SHINYANGA

The old German *boma*, some 25 miles from the present village, has crumbled, and in its place stands the headquarters of research on the control of tsetse-fly for all East Africa. We reached the lab to find the director weighing dead flies on the most delicate of balances. He was measuring the amount of fat in their tissues to find out whether they had lost weight; and they had.

Another entomologist has made from a boy's Meccano set a little cage in which a fly hangs suspended, while a record of the vibration of its wings appears as to graph on a moving drum. From this it has been gleaned that flies of this species beat their wings with greatest vigour at the onset of dusk; the conclusion is that dusk is the usual time for the insect's food-hunting. And this is the time that game, its natural food supply, normally issues from the thickets.

A third example of this minute study of the personal habits of tsetse flies: one of the researchers has discovered a way to tell the age of a fly.

## TANGANYIKA

When the young tsetse emerges from its pupa, the wing's edge is smooth and perfect, but as life goes on, and the fly beats its wings many millions of times against the air, the membrane becomes frayed and ragged. The degree of wing-fray declares the age. As the life of a tsetse lasts for no more than three to six weeks, the estimate needs to be a fine one.

A layman might question the object of such close and laborious studies. The answer is perhaps summed up in the military maxim: 'Know your enemy'.

"To-day probably seven-eighths of Tanganyika is infested," I was told. The fly is not being driven back, or even held; over the country as a whole, it is advancing.

Its presence, of course, does not always exclude men. Only in comparatively small areas does the fly carry the kind of trypanosomes (minute snake-like organisms) which cause sleeping-sickness. In theory, therefore, there is nothing to prevent men from living happily in fly-infested areas, provided they leave their cattle behind; as in fact they do over large parts of West Africa.

Here in the East, however, soil is for the most part too poor, rainfall too low and climate too arid to support a purely crop-raising economy. Man needs cattle in order to live fairly; and, where tsetse dwell, cattle he cannot have. It is for this reason, and because of the lack of water, that the greater part of Tanganyika is a manless wilderness.

In 1921, a red-haired Irishman of demonic energy, on the staff of the Game department, began to carry out experiments. His basic idea was a novel but a simple one. The different species of tsetse fly, like other organisms, have adapted their habits to their environment. Change the environment suddenly, he reasoned, and the habits of the species cannot change too: the tsetse must retreat or perish. The task, then, was to transform the face of Africa: no mean concept, and no easy one.

Swynnerton, with his conviction and enthusiasm, so far succeeded in putting across his ideas that a department was started for research. But he did not live to see to-day's great expansion of the work he started. In 1937 his aircraft crashed into a hill near Singida and he and his senior botanist were killed.

Standing on a rock near his grave, we looked out over a corner of a five-hundred-square-mile block of bush that has been cleared of tsetse and is now inhabited. This was a product of one of Swynnerton's earliest ideas, that tsetse could be pushed back by the control of grass fires.

## SWYNNERTON'S METHODS

Every year, throughout these semi-arid bush-clad regions (the rainfall is less than 30 inches and nearly all this falls in five or six months) fire sweeps through during the parched season. In one of his experiments, Swynnerton encircled a block of bush with wide glades, and kept fires out of it until late in the season, after the grass had seeded. As a result, the grass thickened.

So closely-knit is the fly with its habitat, so fine the adjustment, that this increase in grass cover discouraged the two species he was dealing with (*Glossina morsitans* and *G. swynnertoni*) and their numbers fell off. But some flies remained. Swynnerton noticed that they shunned the matted grass and tended to gather in certain patches known as short-grassed hardpans. So he cleared the hardpans, which amounted to less than five per cent of the whole area, and left the rest alone. This reduced the fly to a point where men and cattle could be brought in to consolidate the gains. Thus a stretch of wilderness passed into human occupation.

Such battles are never over, for in nature nothing stands still. You might think that man, once in possession, would never let go; but this is not the case. For one thing, African man lacks leadership and energy. He will watch the bush thicken without himself going out to cut it back, regarding such phenomena as acts of God rather than as challenges. For another, there may not be enough human hands to keep down the vegetation and enough bovine mouths to graze it; so bush thickens and the fly returns. But if too many people settle there, with too many cattle, over-grazing and soil erosion result. Then land and pasture shrivel, the people trek away, the bush comes creeping back and there you are where you started from—with the tsetse in possession. This has happened in a number of places; it is one of the main reasons for the tsetse's advance.

Standing on top of our nob of giant boulders, the haunt of baboons, Mr. Potts frowned at a patch of vegetation below and inquired of a colleague:

"Would you say that this bush is getting to a point where it might support a population of *swynnertoni*?"

The colleague, looking at it severely, answered:

"To be honest, I would."

That will call for a new campaign of discriminative clearing—not wholesale bush hacking, but a carefully directed attack on certain of the thicker patches. All this reclaimed country is precariously held: a relaxation of effort, a withdrawal of skilled direction, and the fly wins it back in no time.

## TANGANYIKA

Below us a broad open glade, quite treeless, marked a *cordon sanitaire* which the tsetse shrinks from crossing; beyond lay a dark, heavy belt of bush. Fire has been kept out of this block for nearly fifteen years. And the bush has grown dense and luxuriant. The fauna, too, has changed. The light-bush-dwelling tsetse, *swynnertoni* and *morsitans*, have given way to the thicket-dwelling *pallidipes*; eland, roan and impala have abandoned the terrain to bush-pig and duiker.

The wild animals of Africa, unlike their domestic cousins, have long ago won immunity to the attacks of all species of trypanosome, but they carry in their blood the infection and that blood nourishes the fly, and man has therefore condemned them.

Before pronouncing the death sentence without equivocation, scientists are gathering final evidence. In a big block of bush near Old Shinyanga, game is slowly being exterminated—slowly, because it is uncommonly hard to account for the smaller buck, for baboons and above all for the bush-pig, a favourite food of tsetse. Game has nevertheless been thinned out to a point where the tsetse population is dropping, and those that remain go hungry. (The flies I saw weighed in the lab and found short of fat were proof of this.) If, in this block of bush, all the wild life can be slaughtered and all the tsetse then disappear, the doom of the game animals of Africa will be written. (Unless, of course, a better and cheaper method of control is meanwhile discovered; experiments with the spraying of D.D.T. from aircraft in South Africa offer some hope of this.)

Most scientists admit that, even after twenty years' research, they do not know enough about the tsetse to pronounce dogmatically on methods of control. Bit by bit, they are filling in the picture, and sometimes a new fragment of knowledge seems to throw doubt on a control measure based on the incompleting sketch. One of the Shinyanga team, Mr. Burt, discovered recently, for instance, that pupæ incubated at high temperatures produce a larger proportion of trypanosome-infected flies than pupæ which incubate in colder conditions. (Normally, only a small proportion of flies, perhaps one in twenty, harbours the malignant parasite.)

An odd but useless scrap of information, one might say; but, tied up to the technique of tsetse control, it becomes significant. Controlled grass burning late in the season raises the temperature of the soil in which the pupæ incubate. What if, while reducing the numbers of tsetse, late burning should raise the proportion which carry disease? Such questions suggest that it is dangerous to base practical measures on incomplete research.

## LABS ON A SHOESTRING

"We can control tsetse," Mr. Potts summed up, "under certain conditions, and at a certain cost, but we are not satisfied with the answer."

### TINDE

Two inches of rain fell in the night and the sandy erosion gullies became raging torrents. The sleeping-sickness research labs at Tinde seemed to be quite cut off. But a man from the Economic Control Board aroused hope by getting his car propelled through the drift by a posse of jail-birds, and then the river subsided, as rivers do if one only waits, and a lorry was able to churn its way over.

I had been told that Tinde was remarkable, and so it was. The labs themselves consist of a single hut without water or electricity and with a calico reflector rigged up outside the window to lighten the gloom. The staff consists almost literally of two men and a boy: or rather, two men and a wife. (By ill fortune the director, Dr. Fairbairn, was on leave at the time of my visit.)

The place is clearly run on twopence ha'penny a year and a wealth of ingenuity. Its record lends colour to the belief that even to-day, when experiments have become so elaborate and so fine, more (at least in biology) may come out of a corner of a garage rigged up with bent pins and old wire by a young man with ideas, than out of labs gleaming with costly apparatus and staffed by young men of impeccable qualifications but no inspiration.

Much of this research at Tinde is of a fundamental and esoteric character far beyond a layman's understanding, but even an ignoramus must admire the resource shown by young men probing the inner secrets of micro-organisms with the crudest possible kind of apparatus: by Mr. Culwick's camera, for instance, constructed from (among other materials) a bit of car spring, the socket of a tent pole and a five-cent-piece for a total cost of 5/-, and run off the battery of a car.

This camera has photographed objects smaller than the wavelength of light, an operation which generally involves a most complex and costly apparatus. Culwick's expedient was to soak the objects of inquiry in a chemical solution which they absorbed, becoming, as they did so, sufficiently swollen to reflect the light-rays which would otherwise have passed them over. In this way he has recorded, among other things, chromosomes in the nuclei of trypanosomes, a feat of great significance, since the very existence of chromosomes (which imply sexual reproduction) in these tiny creatures had not hitherto been known. He has even photographed an apparent exchange of chromo-



## TANGANYIKA

somes in the 'tryp'—the very essence of the sexual process—and that, if admitted, ought to clinch the matter.

Neither of the Culwicks is a properly trained researcher. After gaining his science degree, Mr. Culwick spent fifteen years in the administration, keeping his hand in as a gadgeteer and making forays into sociology. Now that he has turned to research he seems as much at home proving mathematically that the repulsion of certain positively charged forms of trypanosome by negatively charged blood corpuscles may bear on the basis of immunity, as he doubtless became in totting up his district tax returns. His wife toils over sheet after sheet of laborious drawings and measurements which have yielded the discovery that the species of trypanosome under study has three distinct forms—long, short and intermediate—which vary both in their electrical charges and in their methods of reproduction in the bloodstream.

This fertile combination of the Culwicks, their home-made camera and the bold and able mind of the director has triumphed over such obstacles as lack of money and equipment, and complete scientific isolation, to produce a spate of as yet unpublicised discoveries.

One such is the apparent ability of the 'tryps' to turn themselves into cysts in their hosts' tissues. In the photographs these cysts appear unmistakably as a cluster of tiny billiard-balls among the body cells. Their importance may be great. Sleeping-sickness caused by *T. rhodesiense*, the deadliest form, can be cured by injections given within four to six weeks of infection. After six weeks, the drug will not act, and nothing can save the victim. Nobody knows why this should be so. The possibility opened up by the discovery of these cysts—and so far this is all speculation—is that the 'tryp', under certain conditions, encysts itself, and so becomes impervious to the drug. If this were to be proved, it would open up a whole new field of research in the treatment of sleeping-sickness.

But it is not treatment, important as this is, which is the main concern of the lab. It is the search for a method of immunisation.

In the long history of medicine, no successful method has yet been found of making human beings immune to diseases caused by protozoa. Other forms of 'germ'—bacteria and viruses—have been dealt with by vaccines and serums, but not the larger parasites so common in the tropics. (Malaria is another such.)

The pioneers of Tinde see no reason to dismiss the problem of immunity as insoluble just because hitherto no team of scientists in any country in the world, with all the resources of the great and well-



Lion with leg of zebra, Serengeti

Serengeti lions





Banyaruanda labour trekking into Uganda

Acholi Village



## SLEEPING-SICKNESS VOLUNTEERS

endowed labs behind them, has been able to solve it. After all, they argue, immunity exists in nature. Game animals possess it, and so do those cattle who recover from East Coast fever. If it exists, science can eventually unravel and perhaps imitate it.

And now—this is Tinde's most pregnant discovery—they have found a strain of *T. rhodesiense* in a dog which appears to confer on man immunity to sleeping sickness. The stress must lie on that word appears, for conclusions are tentative. This precious strain of 'tryp', known as Shinyanga I—and diligent search has so far failed to reveal any other—has been passed many times through the blood of goats, and up to the day of my visit, at any rate, no man 'protected' by this goat serum and then infected with sleeping-sickness had contracted the disease.

In a small room adjoining the lab I watched a couple of volunteers exposing their forearms to the bite of caged and hungry tsetse flies infected with *T. rhodesiense*. An African assistant entered their names in a book and gave each man his first payment of 15/-. Once a week, after that, each 'guinea-pig' must report to the labs for a blood test, and about one month later the first symptoms, a high temperature and a headache, appear in the controls. The sufferer is at once injected with the drug (Bayer 205) and popped into the little hospital, where he lies for a few days: then, completely cured, he goes home with the balance of his 40/-, the equivalent of three months' pay for three days' work, in his pocket. It is a wonderful tribute to the drug that all concerned repose such complete faith in it, and so far (one touches wood) it has never failed. The labs have a long waiting-list of volunteers.

The most diligent study of blood-slides has hitherto failed to reveal the presence of 'tryps' in any volunteer treated before infection with the strain Shinyanga I.

It is too soon for the staking out of claims. All the researchers will commit themselves to is the observation:

"A single non-virulent strain taken from a dog appears to confer on man resistance to the Tinde strain of *T. rhodesiense*."

Years of research lie ahead. All one can say is that this discovery opens up an immensely hopeful new line of research. To immunise cattle against 'tryps', should it ever prove possible (and their infection is caused by a different species of trypanosome) would make redundant the possibly hopeless and certainly extravagant task of changing the vegetable face of Africa.

## TANGANYIKA

### MALYA

An easy informality pervades the Tanganyika railway. Trains do not seem to bother much about time-tables. Heavy rains and wash-aways on the line have no doubt confused matters, and as the mail-train seemed to be missing, I was offered a caboose on a goods, and the Indian station-master kindly lent me his mosquito net.

Malya is, at the moment, an idea rather than a place, or even a station. The train halts in the middle of a flat plain typical of all this lakeland region, which somehow manages to look arid and light-soiled even when covered with green grass and good crops. The D.C. met me, waving a lamp, and astonishingly cordial considering that it was five in the morning and he had been waiting on a non-existent platform since about one o'clock.

To a degree unusual in these days of impersonal bureaucracy, Malya is Donald Malcolm's personal creation. It was he who, in his days of secondment to the Colonial Office, hatched the scheme and canvassed it, and then got himself put in charge of its application.

"Malya," he acknowledges, "is one of the very few instances of a dream come true. Few men are lucky enough both to plan and to execute."

Even a brief exposure to his truly formidable energy and enthusiasm gives one some understanding of how it is that so grand a project has reached so far so quickly.

The freshness of the early morning, with a rain-washed world bathed in sunlight not yet grown malevolent, and a host of small birds twittering round the full heads of the sorghum, suited the mood of Malya, a mood of hope and bustle. In physical terms there is not much to see: a row of small houses half built of concrete blocks, tracks through bush churned up by lorries, avenues of young trees each in its little *boma*, the usual builder's litter, gang labourers in their shredded shorts ambling towards some point of assembly. The track passed between two piles of tree-studded granite boulders and led to a thatched and partly open-sided building of the usual court-house pattern.

"The chief's council-chamber," Mr. Malcolm said proudly. "Our ten days' wonder. Temporary, of course; we're building the proper council hall this year. It's to be our star turn." In order to make it worthy of its destiny he has mulled over plans not only with Sukuma chiefs but with experts on constitutional law, to make sure that the shape does not impede 'the indigenous form of government'. It is hexagonal; I am not sure what political deductions can be drawn from that.

## THE SUKUMA FEDERATION

Malya, as I have said, is an idea: an experiment, perhaps, in geopolitics. It will affect the lives of about one million people. The first step is the political federation of 51 separate chiefdoms, each with its separate traditions, pride and inheritance of malice towards its neighbours.

The 51 chiefs are of all types, ranging from English-speaking youths like Kidaha on the one hand to men like the chairman, Majebera, on the other—one of the few who served under the Germans, and a reigning chief for thirty years.

"A man with a twinkle in his eye," said the D.C., "and in all my experience—and I mean this, Whitehall included—I've never seen a better chairman."

From these 51 sultans, an executive committee of 15 has been elected. All these are literate. They will meet often, and houses for them are now being built. Around them will gather a native bureaucracy of clerks, treasurers and supervisors who, like bureaucrats everywhere, will in fact direct most of the business in hand.

The federal council is a council of chiefs only. It will admit no 'common men' to represent the people.

"But there is democracy," Mr. Malcolm protested, with some vehemence. "In fact I'd wager there's more *practical* democracy in Sukumaland than in many countries with ballot-box and party machines and all the trimmings."

"But the chief is hereditary——"

"And yet elected by the people. The choice of sons and nephews is so wide that for all practical purposes the people can choose the best man for the job. If they want a man who doesn't seem to be in the line of succession, the elders can always fit him in somewhere. The chief is no autocrat. On the contrary, he's hedged about with all sorts of checks and safeguards. And to show you that the people really do have a say—five chiefs in Sukumaland have been deposed by the people in the last five years for maladministration.

"Some people seem to think," continued Mr. Malcolm, warming to his work, "that democracy consists of bringing in the educated élite. Left to itself, I've no doubt whatever that the indigenous system of African local government will find ways and means of doing this. In fact, it's happening already in the coastal provinces, where important traders, doctors and other Africans of good standing are being co-opted as advisers.

"Here, we haven't yet reached that point. And don't let's be stampeded into the quite false notion that good citizenship depends on the

## TANGANYIKA

amount of arithmetic or chemistry you've learnt at school. After all, in England we don't expect our Members of Parliament to have university degrees. The average illiterate African knows a great deal about the practical duties and rights of citizenship; he'd be a rash man who said that the average literate knew more.

"So let's stop talking about 'the introduction of democratic principles'. They're already there. Rather let's discuss with the native authorities how to develop such indigenous bodies as village labour societies into co-operatives and unions, and how to bring them into local government. Let's suggest to them the value of advice from citizens who may not be chiefs or elders. That will sow seeds of thought in the minds of the existing representatives of the people—for that's what chiefs really are—and in time those seeds will bear fruit. To rush things now, to force this natural growth in order to conform with our particular theories, would be fatal. The growth of political institutions *must* be slow: it's only when you have a revolution that it's spectacular.

"And, after all, we are making progress. Henry Morton Stanley passed through Sukumaland in eighteen seventy-five and slept a night at Malya. Then, it was devastated by centuries of the slave trade, each village lived in fear of the next, no man trusted his neighbour. Seventy-two years later—not such a vast slice of time in human history—we have a meeting of the Sukumaland Federation representing a million people, and at the end of a morning's work they produced twenty-two unanimous resolutions, some on matters of great importance. They've pooled all their financial resources. Considering that up till nineteen twenty-six each chiefdom was an entirely separate unit, this is no mean advance in mutual trust.

"Lots of changes lie ahead. Local government is continuously developing and expanding. In fifty years' time it will all look very different, but the main thing is that we're on the right lines—indigenous lines. I'm sure of that."

The chiefdoms, as Mr. Malcolm said, have pooled their resources, but these amount to no more than £70,000 a year, of which over half goes to pay the salaries of the chiefs and all their deputies and retainers. Some £30,000 a year is not a large sum to provide for the services and welfare of a million people. Revenues can grow only with the wealth of the country, but at present the resources of Sukumaland shrink rather than swell. That is the background to the other and most important part of the Sukumaland Federation and Development plan.

## SUKUMALAND DEVELOPMENT

Parts of Sukumaland support a population of 400 to the square mile, though 200 to the square mile is a more usual density. Even at the 200 level, land is being flogged to death, for it is light, poor soil, easily wind-blown, and short of water. Agriculture is primitive in the extreme, population pressure now too high to allow exhausted land to be bush-fallowed for long enough to regenerate, and the remaining pastures desperately overstocked.

The old, sad familiar story, in fact: a dislocation of the balance between land and people caused by the medicines of doctor and vet, the strength of the *pax Britannica* and above all by the end of the slave trade, for Sukumaland was one of the Arabs' hunting-grounds, and their ruthless bands no doubt kept the population down to a level well below the land's capacity to support it.

An old story, but Sukumaland is fortunate enough to embrace stretches of country hitherto protected from destruction by the tsetse-fly and by lack of water. The essence of the development plan is to open up these areas by building dams. People from overcrowded districts will then be attracted to these dams as if to magnets, and will themselves clear the bush and establish their own settlements. Once extreme pressure on the land they have quitted has been relieved by emigration—this is the theory—Government and Native Authorities together will be able to restore the devastated areas.

The key to this rehabilitation is thought to be the control of cattle. Destocking, that barrel of dynamite, is to be avoided; rather the method will be to close bits of country for long enough to allow the grass to recover. Meanwhile, 'accelerated agricultural and economic education should encourage the economic disposal of stock increases so that by the time redistribution is far advanced, consumption may naturally balance reproduction', to quote a report on the subject written in the usual jungle English. In other words, the Government banks on propaganda, even though this has hitherto failed practically everywhere to induce cattle-owners to get rid of their surplus. As for the shambas, the peasants will be talked and cajoled into the practice of crop rotations, grass leys, manuring and composting, tree planting and other methods of good husbandry.

That is the plan. The money, some £400,000 spread over ten years, is to come partly from profits made by the Government by selling the cotton crop to India during the war, which repose in an invaluable Agricultural Development Fund, and partly from the British taxpayer. Direction lies in the hands of a team of experts based on Malaya with a full staff of African instructors and assistants. Tractors, lorries, dam-



## TANGANYIKA

scoops and other uncouth-looking implements have arrived already and more are on the way.

Most of the dams that are to rejuvenate Sukumaland are still on paper, but one, the mother of dams, spreads itself at the foot of Malaya as if to show what can be done, in this arid country, with a bit of simple engineering. Or perhaps not so simple, for although this was laid out not by a degree'd and diploma'd engineer but by the indefatigable Donald Malcolm, it cannot have been so easy as it looks.

"This dam," he said, in his eyes the glint of achievement, "would supply a town the size of Dar es Salaam. It holds four hundred and forty million gallons. You see that long bank over there? That's the canal that brought water two and a half miles from a river in the next valley. It carries fifty million gallons a day when running full—fifteen feet wide and five deep. Not bad going when you think that every inch of it was dug by hand labour in three months, by the local people."

After tea we took a rod and a tin of worms and joined a group of fishermen squatting on their haunches and armed with short sticks and pieces of twine. A string of tiddlers lay beside them on the low muddy bank. Although you could not call this flat, featureless country beautiful, the fascination of a sheet of water is eternal, and the wrack of a thunderstorm had filled the sky with shreds of cloud. As the sun behind us slanted down, a rainbow sprang up and was mirrored in the glassy surface, and at sunset companies of snowy egrets came in low across the lake to converge upon a bush half-submerged in the water. After an interlude of squawking and flapping they quietened down and, as the light slowly withdrew from sky and water, their bush looked for all the world like a blossom-loaded hawthorn on an English summer evening. Above the pungent smell of baked cattle dung and the melancholy smell of reeds and water one could almost sniff the sharp, fleeting, heady scent of may.

A party of women in goatskin cloaks and bead ornaments came to draw water. The evening stillness magnified the sound of their shrill voices and the gurgle of water as it entered the narrow necks of their gourds. Behind us, as we strolled home, fish jumped for flies and stirred the lake's wide surface with silvery ripples under a bright moon. Tiny frogs in their hundreds leapt about the path and over our feet.

"Those egrets gave me a ghastly fright one evening," said the D.C. "It was when the dam was filling. Lying in bed, I suddenly heard a noise like the distant rushing of water—the sort of noise you hear when a river's in spate. I dashed out in my pyjamas, thinking the dam

## GERMAN ORIGINS

had broken. But it was only the egrets, disturbed by something, taking off in hundreds for a mass flight."

Lamplight shone through the windows of the bungalow as we approached, and in their beams we could see the black shapes of bats weaving to and fro.

"I shot two hundred and seventeen when I moved in," Donald Malcolm said severely. "And now it looks as if the bat population was catching up on me again."

## MWANZA

Before the Central Line was built, the German Governor, hearing rumours of wicked abuses perpetrated by one of his officers at the back of beyond, sent a runner on foot from Dar es Salaam to Mwanza—the distance by rail is 846 miles—to demand an immediate explanation.

For months the angry Governor awaited the runner's return, inflamed from time to time by further tales of his subordinate's misbehaviour, but correctly awaiting the man's own defence. At last, more than six months later, the exhausted runner presented himself.

"Where is the answer?" demanded the impatient Governor.

"There is no answer, bwana."

"No answer! Did you deliver my letter?"

"Yes, bwana."

"And did he read it?"

"Yes, bwana."

"Well—and what did he say?"

"He said—'That'll do,' and gave me sixpence."

Even to-day, Mwanza seems a long way from the capital. A rocky hill rears out of the Lake, and from the verandas of houses built on its steep sides you can look over the still, blue expanse with its green margins, and green islands rising from illimitable waters, and dhows beached below in fierce sunshine, and the tops of trees which give to the hot streets such unguent shade.

The town still bears marks of its German origin. The cemetery, curiously enough its most attractive spot, occupying a sort of Italianate grotto full of tall trees and mossy rocks and trickling water like a landscape of the Gothic revival, is full of solid tombstones bearing solid Teutonic names. Mortality was evidently high in Mwanza, still no health resort. And a sad corner is given over to simple wooden crosses above the bones of English youths laid by the misfortunes of war in this lonely place, so far from home, in the campaign of 1914-18. Mwanza itself saw no fighting but several skirmishes took place on the

## TANGANYIKA

Lake, and a small vessel tied up in harbour, used only as a freighter, is still in disgrace, I was told, because she hauled down her flag to the enemy.

At the Lake's edge a queer group of monsters called the Bismarck Rocks thrust their smooth grey sides out of the smooth water. The Germans are said to have made a beer-garden on top of the tallest. One can imagine them sitting there in the cool of the evening, looking across at their neat, thriving little post, while the setting sun threw the rocks' shadow far over the land and the sound of their united voices raised in the songs of their fatherland floated powerfully across the water.

"I made a beer-garden myself once," said the Provincial Commissioner. "It was in a one-man station in the Southern Province. My wife and I used to walk up there of a Saturday evening: just a grass hut on top of a rise overlooking the river. We'd sleep out there sometimes; it was a bit cooler than down in the station."

"We had a Christmas party there," said his wife. "Or at least the beginning of one. Five of us: ourselves, an Irish vet, an Ulsterman, and the German manager of a rice-mill who walked twenty miles to get to it. On Christmas Eve we went up to the beer-garden and everyone started to sing his own national songs. That led to words between the Ulsterman and the man from Eire, and that set the German off, and finally they got so belligerent that we had to call off the party."

Now that huge, remote Southern Province, cut off for the five or six wet months of the year by lack of roads and bridges, is to have its long isolation broken by an invasion of groundnutters. Road-houses with fruit-machines will perhaps spring from the sites of old, abandoned beer-gardens. Those who have known the hardships and lonely joys of one-man stations in the blue cannot entirely hide a certain contempt for the exacting demands (as they think) of the softer modern pioneer. And a lecturer from the London School of Economics remarked of the groundnutters:

"In the last century your pioneer went out into the bush, cleared himself a patch of land, planted his crop and lived off the country till he got his first harvest; then he cleared more land, got a bigger crop, and in a season or two maybe built himself a rough sort of house and bought a few necessities. To-day, your experts first select the land by air and jeep, and build roads and railways to it. Then they lay out the hospital, the cinema and the football ground and put up houses. Then they get machinery. When all's ready the staff moves in and makes a

## GOLD-MINING

start. I met an electrician going out to wire the houses—that was before a single acre of land had been ploughed.” It is only fair to add that most groundnutters are still tent-dwellers.

Mwanza lives on a small rice-milling industry and on its business as a lacustrine port and railway terminus. Neither seems capable of great expansion, and as a port Mwanza smarts under the permanent grievance that much of the produce it would like to be handling is drawn away to Kisumu and the Kenya railway, which offers a cheaper and quicker outlet to the sea.

This is a sore point with all Tanganyika nationalists, of whom the Indians, being most concerned, are the most ardent. The hard facts are that Kisumu to Mombasa is a shorter haul than Mwanza to Dar es Salaam, that traffic density in Kenya is greater and costs therefore lower, and that Mombasa is a better port than ‘Dar’. So Kisumu has grown at the expense of Mwanza, and the compulsions of geography have hitherto been too much for the nationalism of Tanganyika.

The town is perhaps drawing some consolation from its growing importance as a mining centre. Gold mines lie to right and to left of it: Musoma eastwards towards the Kenya border, Geita about 80 miles to the west, and cut off at present, like most places in Tanganyika, by flooded roads and drifts.

Geita has now become the largest goldfield in East Africa, employing a hundred Europeans and an African force of some 4,000—when the men can be found. The reef, it seems, is fat and strong, but the hands to win its gold are lacking both in numbers and in energy. The daily output of ore has fallen from half a ton per man to less than a third of a ton. In Canada it is two tons and a half.

“The cream of the labour force was skimmed off by war-time recruitment,” said the managing director. (Unable to reach the mine itself, I was fortunate to encounter this lean, soft-spoken and hard-boiled Canadian.) “As for the ex-soldiers who came back—they figure they’ve done their life’s work already.”

Mwanza can offer some of the worst housing, I should think, in Africa. (Lagos can out-match it, and on a larger scale.) Here I met a dresser from the hospital who had himself become a patient, having had a leg broken by the roof of his house falling in. If no money has been spent for a long time on municipal improvements, it is because the town has no money of its own to spend. The rents, small as they are—even the rents of market stands and beer-stalls—go into no municipal fund, but vanish into the central Government’s revenue,

## TANGANYIKA

and to the citizens of Mwanza this appears to be a bourne from which no monetary traveller returns.

A Judge of the High Court is sitting in Mwanza. Such Judges go round on assize to hear serious criminal cases, appeals from lower courts and all cases in which 'non-natives' are involved.

Some years ago Tanganyika was renowned, even among fellow-sufferers, for the frequency with which justice was travestied by the law. The burden of the complaint was that points of law designed to protect the innocent in Britain merely aided the guilty and confounded the good in Africa, where rules of evidence evolved to suit totally different conditions simply cannot be applied without nullifying far too many prosecutions.

It is rare to find a District Officer who does not speak with feeling and sometimes bitterness of the law's rigidity. Such officers may also be magistrates, and their cases are reviewed by Judges who often know the letter of the law but nothing of native custom and of the circumstances of the case. The officer may know all about the local circumstances but too little about the law. The result may be that a judgment which does in fact punish the guilty is upset on technical grounds, and the convicted party, to his own astonishment, is freed.

Such cases puzzle all Africans and offend some—for instance chiefs or headmen who may have gone to great trouble to apprehend the culprit, and feel betrayed when their efforts end in the triumphant return of the criminal, openly boasting of his guilt and often attributing his release to superior magic.

Hardest of all to understand, in African eyes, is the acquittal of men who have themselves pleaded guilty. It is no wonder that the British legal system has assumed in their minds more of the character of a lottery than of justice. Nor, perhaps, is it surprising that crime of all kinds, once very rare, has been steadily increasing, and has now taken an upward bound so formidable that in places the machinery of law-enforcement is cracking under the strain and the private citizen is being forced to take his own measures for the protection of his life and property.

In Mwanza I was able to add one or two more pieces to a collection of instances of the triumph of legality over justice in these territories. Here are three specimens, told to me at first-hand.

In a remote district—the far south again—a D.C. heard rumours of the murder of a woman by a sub-chief. This man, on being questioned, admitted the charge. He had killed the woman, he explained, because

## A DUEL BETWEEN WITCHDOCTORS

she was a dangerous witch and a menace to the community, and he was quite proud of the deed. He led the D.C. to the spot where her bones were buried and together they disinterred them.

The D.C. found witnesses to testify that the sub-chief had publicly announced his intention of killing the witch, and others to swear that they had heard him say he had done so. A third described how the sub-chief had enticed the victim from her hut with a white cock to purify her after the death of her husband. The culprit, properly cautioned, made a full confession. In due course the case was heard by the High Court and the man acquitted, on the grounds that there was no medical proof that the woman's bones were human, that the evidence was circumstantial, and that confession to a magistrate was 'not favoured'.

Another 'bush' case: on taking over his district, an officer inherited a warning to look out for a man believed to have killed five or six people, and to have escaped over the Portuguese border. By a piece of clever work on the part of the local chief this man was taken. Far from being abashed, he boasted that he was an important witchdoctor who had engaged in trials of strength with other witchdoctors. As he knew the antidote to the poison and they did not, his rivals died and he escaped. The D.C. dug up the bodies of three of his victims, found several witnesses against him—with difficulty, for the culprit was greatly feared—cautioned him properly and took a full statement. The culprit made no attempt to conceal his crimes. He had, he said, bewitched the D.C., and therefore no harm could come to him.

This case also was dismissed, on the grounds that confession should have been made to a third party. ('There *wasn't* a third party within fifty miles!' the D.C. commented) and that there was no evidence that the poison was administered, or, having been administered, was the cause of death. ('In other words, no Sir Bernard Spilsbury in the bush!')

"Good law, maybe," added the D.C., "but bad justice. The witchdoctor's prestige of course soared sky-high and the Government's sank to zero. Some of those we'd called as witnesses had to leave the district in fear of their lives—they knew that we couldn't protect them."

Finally, a small example from a town. An Indian trader was convicted of selling rice for more than the controlled price. He appealed on the grounds that although the order fixing the price, and published in the *Official Gazette*, was itself correctly dated, no date for its coming into force was incorporated into the body of the order. The first appeal failed, but the Appeal Court of Eastern Africa quashed the conviction on the grounds of an incorrectly drafted order. The fact that

## TANGANYIKA

the man had in fact sold rice at black market prices was never disputed.

It is hard for Africans, or for that matter for Europeans, to understand such legal quibbles, especially when native law is as a rule so fair and swift and well comprehended. Without benefit of lawyers or written statutes or judges with special coaches and wigs and retinues, it seldom fails to fix the guilt on the right shoulders and to punish the offender. Justice is a thing all Africans understand, but the British legal system is beyond them.

### UKIRIGURU

Driving out of Mwanza, we met a stream of cyclists with teapots slung on each end of a stick laid across their handlebars. This was the milk supply coming in, to be sold at the market for ten cents a teapot.

Once out of the town the shady trees vanished and we drove through flat, bare country laid open to the sun, typical of all this lake-land region. Trees grew here once, but all have gone for fuel. Small boys herded small cattle and skinny goats near the roadside, and we passed many shambas, some planted with tall ripening sorghum, some with rather seedy-looking cotton. Our destination was an experimental station run by the Empire Cotton Growing Corporation, a Government-maintained body.

"Cotton production in the Lake Province is about forty thousand bales a year," said the director, "all from native shambas. With better seed and better farming we could increase it to one hundred thousand bales from the same acreage. With communal cultivation of what we call the *mbugas*, those swampy depressions where the soil is too heavy for native hoes and needs tractor-drawn implements, we could raise the output easily to one hundred and fifty thousand bales."

It is part of Ukiriguru's job to produce cotton seed especially suited to local conditions, and this they have done; in particular, they have bred a variety completely resistant to a pest known as jassid. The jassid is a fly which lays its eggs on the leaf. They bred a plant with hairy leaves, and with hairs longer than the fly's ovipositor, so that the jassid could not reach down to the surface to deposit its eggs. As simple as that.

In other directions they have not been so successful.

"We so-called experts," an Agricultural Officer said, "have made a lot of blunders. We found the native mixing up all his crops, and told him to grow them separately. We found him broadcasting his seed, and told him to plant in rows. We found his shambas dirty, and

## TIE-RIDGING

told him to clean them. In fact we positively forced him to adopt our 'improvements'. And the result was soil exhaustion made a thousand times worse.

"So now we're cautious. We can't afford any more mistakes. And we're confident that this time we *have* found the answer—the real answer. We know how the African can double and treble his yield from the same acreage, and at the same time build up his soil instead of killing it. And the trouble is, we can't get him to do it."

"And your answer is. . .?"

"Tie-ridging, grass leys and manure."

Tie-ridging is one of the great discoveries of recent years in the art of husbandry. You make first a series of small parallel ridges (as if you were ridging potatoes) along the contour, and then you join them by another series of transverse bunds, so that the whole field is divided into little squares or basins. (In America it is known as basin listing.) The object is to trap every drop of rainfall after a storm. And, in these parts, a badly distributed rainfall is the limiting factor, falling in some years to as little as 17 inches.

"Tie-ridging is proved," they said, and proceeded to show me fields of good cotton and bad. The bad is grown exactly as the peasant grows it and yields, like his, 200 to 300 pounds of lint an acre. The tie-ridged cotton yields between 1,500 and 2,00 pounds.

"They could average one thousand pounds at least, good years and bad," say these experts.

You would think that such a simple discovery, and one so easy for the cultivator to practice without special implements or skill, would spread like a bush-fire.

"We have preached tie-ridging morning, noon and night," said the director. "We've had parties of chiefs here, parties of ordinary cultivators; anyone can look over the boundary and see at a glance the difference between our crops and theirs. And you can see some of the worst farming in the province within half-a-mile of this station."

An agricultural instructor, an experienced and intelligent African, was walking round the plots with us, and to him we put the question:

"Surely it's plain enough for your people to see? Why won't they do it?"

"Too much work," the instructor answered, shaking his head.

"But it would bring them in three times the money. And surely the women would do the work of tie-ridging."

"But the man marks out the plot. And I think he would rather see a



## TANGANYIKA

big shamba which might not produce so much, than a little shamba with a big crop."

Prestige, the joy of looking out over broad half-acres . . . but perhaps more than that. For centuries the cultivator has held to a simple equation: the more he plants, the more he harvests; the idea of getting more off the same plot of land by odd manipulations is both foreign and revolutionary. He half believes it to be a new kind of white man's magic, something 'they' can do, but not the ordinary African—'*shauri ya mzungu*', the white man's affair. And little or nothing has been done to convince the women. They, after all, are the ones to labour in the fields, and who knows how much of the passive resistance to new methods comes from these industrious dielhards?

Cattle, however, belong to the men, and manuring is as hard to put across as tie-ridging. Indolence is blamed again; but the Agricultural Officer said:

"We reckoned it out that a man—or a woman, more likely—would have to walk one hundred and fifty miles, carrying a head-load of dung, to manure one acre at the rate of six tons. And in this heat. . . . We tried a free issue of wheelbarrows, but it wasn't a success. One trouble is the lack of firewood. They have nothing else to burn but dung. We shall make no progress until we can get them to start—and look after—plantations of trees."

It is a common practice here (as among the Wagogo) to bury the head of the family in the very heart and hub of his small estate, the cattle *boma*. Sometimes refusal to carry manure has sprung from a natural reluctance to tear away grandfather's dungy envelope and disturb his vengeful bones.

"The only practical way is to get the cattle to take the manure on to the shambas themselves," say the experts. "In other words—grass leys."

This has led to the testing of many species of grass to find those best suited to local conditions, and then to isolation and breeding of the most likely strains. A search is under way, also, for a substitute for clover. Any number of local legumes have been found, some of them hitherto quite unsuspected, ranging from bushes to tiny creeping plants, and the habits of each one are being watched and studied. All this is pasture research starting from the very foundations, which should have been laid long ago; it will be years before firm results can be seen. And even then the real struggle, the struggle to implant these new ideas in the minds of the people, will scarcely have begun.

The best persuaders of Africans are always other Africans. A

## COMPULSION OR PROPAGANDA?

strong, keen corps of agricultural missionaries who will go from shamba to shamba talking to the peasants and demonstrating with their own hands what needs to be done, is to be the pith and kernel of the Government's plan to regenerate the Lake Province. These instructors are under training at Ukiriguru. Just at present the scheme is running up against a shortage of boys with a proper grounding.

"It's no good our taking in lads who know no English and can't grasp the basic theory," said the A.O. in charge. "But the pool of boys who've reached a high enough standard is quite inadequate. Besides, most of those with a seconadry education don't fancy agriculture—they come here and then jib at the practical work. So it comes to this: a lot of candidates either lack the grounding to grasp what we're driving at, or the will to tackle the practical side. Not all, of course; we do get some cracking good lads; but now we're having to take in boys of Standard VI level, and our wastage is high. Probably not more than half our present entry will make the grade."

This means an output of less than 20 boys a year. The target for the territory is a force of 2,000.

Yet the staff at Ukiriguru is hopeful.

"We think we've got the right answers," they say. "We're on the right track. It's only a question of time, and elbow-room (and of course money) to thin out the population, before we put it over."

"We shall have to face up to compulsion," the A.O. said bluntly. "We may not like it, but unless we use it now we shall be too late. Ten years ago the Lake Province exported a lot of grain. It's barely self-supporting now, and in a few years' time it will be on the dole. We forced thousands of people to move from sleeping-sickness areas when their lives were threatened. Their lives are just as much threatened now—by starvation. Where's the difference? And these people are used to authority, a lot of the old slavery tradition survives. Give them orders and mean it, and they'll obey. If not, they'll starve. Propaganda alone will take too long. . . ."

An administrative officer suggested: "We've never really given propaganda a chance. It's an art, and none of us understands it properly. And for the last six war years we've been at a standstill, desperately short of staff. When I get depressed I compare it with pushing a car out of the mud. You push and you push till you're black in the face and nothing seems to happen, and then you almost bust yourself with a terrific heave and she suddenly comes clear. Perhaps it will be like that."

"We shall see," said the Agricultural Officer.

## TANGANYIKA

### BUKOBWA

The S.S. *Usinga* is a miniature liner of 1,200 tons: clean, comfortable, well found, and commanded by a captain of reassuringly nautical appearance who has been sailing round Lake Victoria—a week's voyage—for 20 years. She is one of a small fleet of vessels, run by the Kenya and Uganda Railways and Harbours, which come out from Britain in pieces and are launched at Kisumu, six hundred miles from the sea.

Lake storms, they say, can be sudden and fierce, but we chugged without a tremor over the placid waters towards a sun that set in crimson splendour behind the mountains of Ruanda. Next morning we awoke to slatey skies and a steady drizzle, and docked in the rain alongside a jetty piled with sacks of coffee, and dotted with listless-seeming Bukobans sheltering under banana-leaf umbrellas.

At eleven o'clock I drove to the council-house on a hill overlooking the Lake for a chiefs' meeting. Bukoba already has its federation, one comparatively easy to bring about in this quite distinctive region, for its eight chiefs are members of an inter-related ruling class of different blood from their subjects. They are, in fact, offshoots of the Bahima people who came down from the north in the seventeenth century with their long-horned cattle and conquered most of what is now Uganda and the Belgian 'trust territory' Ruanda-Irundi.

As soon as you cross the Lake you feel yourself in a different atmosphere, and among a different people. Climate and vegetation are of another order. Gone is the aridity, the treeless plain, the dusty cattle-tracks. Here are the tall evergreen trees and the lushness of a tropical landscape, steep hills with rocky outcrops, and a rainfall double that on the Mwanza side.

The eight chiefs had gathered round a green baize-covered table in a sort of board-room to discuss current affairs with the D.C. In appearance they varied as much as eight individuals are likely to vary anywhere; among them were tall men and short, light-skinned and ebony, thin and fat. They were dressed like business men in tidy suits with collars and ties, in contrast to the two British officials who wore shorts, open-necked shirts and rather shabby pullovers.

These chiefs—or Bakama, as they prefer to be called—are, indeed, among the richest men in Tanganyika. Until recently one of them drew £3,000 a year, considerably more than the Chief Secretary. The modern tendency is to reduce these salaries, which make a very large hole in the native treasury, and the highest figure is now £1,100—even so, not bad pay in a land where the average cash wage is £7 or

An Acholi welcome



A young Acholi



KALAWA KAGWA,  
Prime Minister of Buganda



A Masai art student :  
Tombo at Makerere



## A CHIEFS' COUNCIL

£8 a year. Their perks and privileges, of course, are great, and Europeans sometimes say it is unfair that they should be exempt from income tax, when the D.O. on £500 a year must pay his share. Outside the court-house stood their gleaming motor-cars, each with its driver. None of the four Government officers in Bukoba has a car, and the D.C. arrived in a hired Indian taxi.

Coffee was the main topic of discussion, as it is the country's main industry. As a producer, Bukoba ranks second only to the Kilimanjaro region, but it grows a different species of coffee: *robusta*, as opposed to *arabica*; as its name implies, a hardier kind. The bush is indigenous, and has been cultivated for generations. (John Hanning Speke, who passed through the western part of the province in 1861, speaks of a thriving trade in coffee grown by the Bahaya tribe.) Each tree-owner picks the 'cherries' at all stages of ripeness; the sun dries them into black beans known as *buni*, which sell for a much lower price than properly prepared coffee but require much less attention.

Until 1940, a host of small Indian and Arab traders—over 1,200, it is believed—bought small parcels of cherry from individual growers for the lowest price they could beat them down to, treated the coffee in small, inefficient presses, and sold it to the agents of exporters. The Government now proposes to control and perhaps squeeze out these middlemen by one of those fashionable but complicated modern structures of fixed prices all along the line, licensed buyers and central curing plants, directed by a Government-appointed Bukoba Native Coffee Board. The aims are to give the African a bigger cut of the price, to improve quality and to clear the way for the grower's co-operative which, it is hoped, will come. But co-operation cannot be imposed from the top, and though the eight chiefs have been taken to Moshi to see the Chagga's achievement, the seeds thus sown have not yet germinated.

From coffee—the chiefs, a little dubiously, perhaps, approved the plan—the meeting passed on to prostitutes, a burning topic.

"The main exports of Bukoba," I had been told, almost as soon as I landed, "are prostitutes and coffee, in that order." Bahaya women are famous, it seems, in this capacity, as far afield as Nairobi, Mombasa and Dar es Salaam.

"Only last week we had a complaint from the D.C., Mombasa," said one of the officials, "that a train had come in packed with Bukoba women. He asked us to put a stop to it. But what can we do?"

The chiefs had an answer. "The name of our people is being disgraced," one of them said at this meeting, "and it hurts our *heshima*."

## TANGANYIKA

(That useful and ubiquitous word, meaning 'face', or pride, or self-respect.) Their proposal was to require every woman would-be traveller to get from her chief a permit to board the lake steamer. Such an order needed the Government's approval, and an answer had come back from the Chief Secretary turning it down on the grounds that it 'infringed the liberty of the subject'.

Clearly this answer puzzled and disappointed the chiefs. The liberty of the female subject to go where she pleases is not a concept familiar to African men.

The Bakama, however, also proposed the starting of a girls' school, and voted money for it from the native treasury. The school, they hopefully suggested, would provide at least a few of the girls with other interests—a remedy that has not, alas, cured the same trouble elsewhere.

Why should the women of Bukoba in particular flock to the profession? As we drove out of the small township and climbed, in our taxi, into the rolling cultivated downlands above, the young D.O. waved his hand towards some women advancing along the road and said:

"There's the explanation."

Each of the women, clad in a bright printed cotton cloth, carried on her head a big, long-necked gourd full of native beer.

"They're taking it to their husbands or fathers. They brew it, but the men drink it. The men are rotten with drink and V.D.—too demoralised to work, as a rule. A woman's life here is all shamba-work and child-bearing. No wonder they clear out and look for easy money in the towns."

A little later he added: "There's a sight you won't see anywhere else but in Bukoba."

We passed a man clasping a beer-gourd with a long straw in its neck. From time to time he sucked at the straw as he walked, without pausing, as if to give him strength for further effort.

"One sub-chief I know," added the D.O., "has a ration of three gourds of *pombe* to last him from his house to his chief's court. One wife walks in front with a gourd on her head, a second follows behind with another gourd, and he walks in the middle carrying a third and sucking at a straw in its neck as he goes along."

These gourds vary in size, but few can hold less than a couple of gallons.

"Yes, the women have my sympathy," the D.O. (a bachelor) said.

## TOO MUCH PROSPERITY

"When they get tired of their wives some of the old men seek distraction in seducing very young girls; I've known children of eight or nine infected with V.D. Not a pleasant subject, but the truth—and a tougher nut to crack than the marketing of coffee. . . ."

If the women leave because their men are idle, drunken and diseased, why have the men fallen into this state? It was not always so. The explorer, Speke, writes with strong approval of the industry and friendly manners of the people of Karagwe, a little farther to the west, who 'were all kept in good order', and in particular of the intelligence and good address of their king Rumanika. He wrote, it is true, of the especial excellence of the local beer brewed from bananas, but did not suggest that the men were more than usually addicted to it.

One explanation, true or false, suggested in Bukoba was a depressing one: too much prosperity. The Bahaya seem to have achieved, in large measure, that state towards which our own society is so painfully struggling: the enjoyment of long hours, indeed weeks, of leisure, freedom from fear and want, and the satisfaction of material needs at the expense of the minimum of effort. It is a sobering thought that this happy state, at least in their soft tropical climate, seems to have corroded their will to work and rotted away their self-respect and morals.

Behind Bukoba the country rises steeply to form a series of fine rolling ridges like upland pastures or sheep walks. (Speke grew so lyrical in his descriptions of the region over to the west, with its 'magnificent trees of extraordinary height', its cool, grassy uplands and its lakes reminding him of Scotland, that he described himself and Grant, those tough and hirsute Victorians, as 'tripping over the green-sward' to meet the delightful Rumanika.) Cultivation seems pinched in to the valleys, where every foot of land is taken up; because of this, lawsuits about inheritance and ownership of shambas are many and bitter. (It is a coincidence that banana-eating and litigious natures often go together? The Baganda and the Chagga are other examples.)

Our destination was a White Fathers' Mission which stands proudly on a crest of the downs, roofed most attractively with home-made tiles. It is a great point with the Roman Missions to teach crafts as well as doctrine. This Mission, like others of its breed, was built, and well built, by adherents trained by the Fathers; and the man we were seeking emerged from a welter of type and formes in a sort of cellar where he was instructing apprentice printers.

We had come to him because I had been told that he had as an assistant a Muhaya sculptor of great talent. The Father, his long white



## TANGANYIKA

robes swishing over the muddy path, conducted us to a shed full of painted wooden carvings of saints, clay models of the Virgin and the Nativity, and the like. Technical skill of a high order had gone to their making, but each was an exact and life-like copy, wooden in every sense of the word; no touch of the creator, if such there had ever been, had survived the sacred training.

Out of a total population of 350,000, in all Bukoba, the White Fathers claim 100,000 adherents. In few African regions can the proportion of adherents be higher or the practice of morals, if half of what one hears is true, be more lax.

The Fathers are French Canadians; bearded, ruddy-checked, simple, sincere. It is strange to think of them labouring so faithfully in this lush and tropic vineyard, so far from those austere and noble forests and mountains of their native Quebec. The rules of their Society permit one visit, and one visit only, to their homeland, at the end of ten years; after that they seldom set eyes again on family and village. The White Sisters are forbidden even that indulgence. Once they become members of the Order, they never see their own country again.

Like the Fathers, these nuns are Canadian, but among them is one Englishwoman, a pale, smiling, spectacled teacher from a Surrey council school. To a casual suggestion that she must at times regret this severance from friends and family, she smiled—she seemed always to be smiling—and responded:

“Really, I keep too busy to fret, and we may receive letters. My mother and sisters write quite often. . . .”

The school was crowded, and the girls at their desks looked tidy, clean and docile. They spoke to the nuns in soft voices, respectfully, with downcast eyes; their faces, compared with some Africans, seemed to me rather dull and coarse, but not unintelligent. The handiwork was of a high order. Their deft fingers twist coloured raffia into close-woven, light, fine baskets—a traditional craft.

I asked if any had won a way into the senior school at Tabora. The face of the Mother Superior lit up.

“We had one pupil—quick, intelligent, such a promising girl. We had hoped she would do well at Tabora and perhaps even beyond, but, alas . . .”

The Mother Superior gazed out of the window a little wistfully, dwelling for an instant, perhaps, on the sin of vainglory. Then, with a smile, she opened a box full of baby garments.

“Well executed, are they not? Our girls have a real gift for the work of the fingers.”

## AN UPHILL STRUGGLE

It was hard to expunge from the mind the image of those smooth, smiling nuns' faces peering from their starched coifs, the twinkling children's eyes of the bearded Fathers. Does their faith blind them to reality, or give to their vision a perspective more true than ours? . . . As we drove back to the little town, clasping a present of three sacred water-colours framed in *passe partout*, the afternoon thunderstorm was gathering heavily over the mountains of Karagwe and Ruanda.

## Part Five

# UGANDA

AS we bowled along the narrow murram road from the Uganda border to Masaka, Tanganyika behind us, Bilasio asked in shaken and incredulous tones:

"Are *all* the roads in Tanganyika as bad as that one?"

Bilasio is a smart, competent Muganda in charge of a gleaming staff car which came down from Kampala full of maps, log-books and schedules. The Tanganyikans looked at his chariot with respect, for only chiefs have cars like that in Bukoba; the Governor, should he come, would have to make do with an Indian taxi; and the driver looked back with a discreet impassivity masking, one would guess, a deep disdain for these uncouth savages.

I had to tell him that our road had been one of the best. True, we had sloshed along for miles with water up to the wheel-hubs, bounced in and out of potholes and in places slithered about like a large dog wagged by its tail, but, thanks to his excellent driving, we had not stuck at all, and a road which you can traverse in the rains without sticking ranks as a first-rate one anywhere in Tanganyika.

Roads are to Uganda what the police force is to London; but nowadays the usual accolade is met with the Ruth Draperish reply:

"They're nothing like what they used to be. You should have seen them before the war!"

As we travelled north the country grew flat and swampy, full of tall, thick-stemmed grass, and the people seemed better dressed, generally in the long white *kanzu* instead of in a torn shirt and ragged pair of shorts. We passed more rectangular houses and fewer of the traditional round huts. (Advancement and a four-cornered dwelling seem to have become synonymous; one never sees an 'educated' African living in a round hut, yet rondavels are in many ways the more pleasant and climatically suitable.) It may have been imagination, but we seemed to sense a change of atmosphere; to pass from the last outpost of the old, crude, happy-go-lucky Africa to the threshold of the new, 'civilised', political, materialist native states.

At the Kagera ferry a host of people of all shapes and sizes tramped on board—old greybeards, young men, women with babies, skinny-

## A PRESS-GANG AT MASAKA

legged, half-naked children. Each individual bore a load on his head. Even the children carried a blanket or a cooking pot; the women had bags of grain and calabashes of cooked meal or roots wrapped in leaves; the men cigar-shaped bundles tightly strapped with home-made cords of twisted fibre. All looked poor, thin, ill-clad and uncouth, not at all like the prosperous citizens of Uganda.

Bilasio, glancing at them briefly, said:

"They are Banyaruanda," and went on brushing caked mud off the bonnet of his car.

This is the labour force of Uganda: immigrants who flock from the Belgian trust territory of Ruanda-Irundi to the British Protectorate's promised land. They arrive *en famille*, food for the journey and all their poor possessions on their heads and backs, and stay sometimes for years, sometimes for ever. As we drove north we overtook party after party of them streaming up the road, and, towards nightfall, bivouacked by the roadside. Some were on their way to the big Indian-owned sugar plantations near Jinja, but most work for Baganda landowners and farmers. This great movement of population is based on the employment of Africans by Africans, not on the intrusion of foreign capital.

This makes labour conditions almost impossible to supervise. The inspector with his tables of calories and cubic air space per worker can prowl at will round the plantation company's 'lines', but cannot follow the immigrant into the huts of his African employer. And exploitation is not a European invention. It was in Masaka that agents of the Protectorate Government discovered a noisome sort of prison, without windows or light or fresh air or bedding, where half-starved Banyaruanda, shanghaied from their bivouacks, were tied to stakes by night and forced to work by day, without wages, for a syndicate of Baganda 'contractors'.

From the hotel outside Masaka (made mostly of rondavels) you look down on all sides, it seems, on water: creeks, inlets, swamps and the distant shining surface of the great Lake itself, under a wind-blown sky filled with banks of cloud, indigo and violet and dove-grey. The view from the hotel is magnificent, seen over green lawns and flower-beds brilliant with scarlet salvias.

## MBARARA

West of Masaka, the country changes. You leave the swampy lake-land flats and rise on to the green rolling downs of Ankole, the home of the big cattle with heavy sweeping horns that were brought down

## UGANDA

from the far north by their Bahima owners about four centuries ago.

These Bahima still form the ruling race of Ankole. Little is known, or probably ever will be known, of their origins and migrations. They are Hamites: tall, well-built, light-skinned folk with a look of the Arab or Berber about them and related, it is believed, to the Galla peoples of Abyssinia. They have no Negro blood, and their faces lack the coarseness and breadth of Negro and Bantu features. Sir Harry Johnston, writing at the end of the last century, commented on the shapeliness of their hands and feet.

To-day, more than ever, it is rare to find a pure-blooded Muhima. Over the centuries they have merged and blended with the Bantu races they found and dominated until many tribes, such as the Baganda and the Banyoro, have a good deal of Hamitic blood in them. The intelligence and enterprise of the Baganda has been attributed, rightly or wrongly, in part at least to this Hamitic admixture.

Men of Bahima blood still form the ruling dynasties of most of these mid-African Kingdoms—Buganda, Bunyoro, Toro, Bukoba, Ruanda—but in Ankole they also live as tribesmen, in rough yet haughty fashion. Here they wander still with their long-horned cattle as they used to do, proud nomads, too proud to cultivate, despising the settled Bairo folk as land-grubbers, despising clothes, despising practically everything but their fine beasts and their own gods.

One of the stranger Bahima customs, in our eyes, is to stuff both chiefs and women so full of milk that they become grotesquely fat. The last Omugabe, or king, weighed 26 stone, and had to be heaved and pushed into his car by a posse of attendants.

"I used to go away when this was happening, I couldn't bear to watch it," said the D.C. "Negley Farson described it in his book," he added. "He said the car was a Ford Ten, but he was wrong. It was much bigger. No one could have got the Omugabe into a Ford Ten."

Now that Omugabe is dead, and a young man rules in his stead—a slim young man, so far.

"I'm trying to stop him drinking so much milk," the D.C. remarked. "It's difficult. It's expected of him, and he wants to do the right thing."

Many peculiar duties come the way of D.C.s, and to keep a king away from the milk-bottle must be one of the oddest.

"It's a cruel custom," he added. "The richer Bahima still fatten their brides on milk. The girls have to be forcibly fed. I've seen one myself so fat that she couldn't stand up; she could only walk on all fours." Yet before they marry the girls are slim and beautifully made.

Times have not changed much since the missionary Ruth Fisher

## A NATIVE AUTOCRACY

wrote in 1900: "On one occasion, while walking along the road, we heard screaming and shouting coming from a hut, and, on going in, saw a young princess with her eyes bandaged and face dripping with milk; an old hag was standing over her with a cane, which she brought sharply down across her shoulders when the unfortunate girl declared that she could take in no more milk."

The executive head of the kingdom is the Prime Minister, a tall, intelligent-looking man in a white robe, literate but not English-speaking. In his office just outside the little town he gave me an outline of the changes that have taken place within the last year in the constitution of his kingdom.

Throughout the Protectorate there is a drive on foot to introduce into these old and feudal native states a greater measure of democracy.

For centuries, the king and his henchmen have ruled these countries autocratically, with the help of a hierarchy of chiefs. The British came to these countries not, as a rule, as conquerors but as protectors accepted by the rulers, with whom they signed treaties. These treaties recognised the authority of the king and undertook to respect his traditional form of government. That this government was undemocratic did not seem so important in 1900 as in 1945. British authority took on itself the right to stop abuses and maintain law and order, but not to do away with the existing form of government and substitute a new one.

The most closely organised and politically developed of these petty kingdoms was Buganda,<sup>1</sup> and from it others took their cue. Buganda had its parliament or council of state, the Lukiko, comprising the most powerful barons, known as *saza* chiefs, each one of whom was responsible to the ruler for the peace and loyalty of a part of the kingdom. From the most influential of these, prime minister, treasurer and other functionaries were selected.

Each county or *saza* was in turn subdivided into smaller areas called the *gombolola*, and each *gombolola* had its chief. Below this there was yet another set of even smaller areas and more junior chiefs, corresponding to the parish. The whole made a strong network of government with the king poised at the apex and holding absolute powers over the entire system. This was the existing set-up which the British undertook by the treaties of 1900 to respect.

Ankole, another of the treaty states, has for long had its council of

<sup>1</sup>All this nomenclature is confusing. The country is Buganda, the people Baganda, a single individual a Muganda and the language Luganda. Most of the other kingdoms (e.g., Bunyoro) and peoples (e.g., Bahima) follow the same pattern.

## UGANDA

saza notables, until recently an assembly of chiefs and chiefs alone. No representatives of the ordinary people attended. It was something like the medieval English parliament before Simon de Montfort's reforms.

So matters rested until about a year ago. Since chiefs in Uganda, like the privileged everywhere, do not like to surrender to people they look down on a part, at least, of the authority they enjoy by hereditary right, the Government expected a good deal of opposition to its proposals; to everyone's surprise, very little seems to have materialised.

In Ankole, the very acceptance of autocracy paved the way for its dissolution. Once the Omugabe had agreed, no one protested. It is worth noting that this reform came from outside and above; there was little demand for it from the people themselves. The Bahima have an ingrained sense of loyalty to their rulers and spend their passions on cattle, not on politics; and the cultivators, the Bairo, with a long tradition of subservience to their Bahima overlords, think more of their crops than of their rights.

Now there is a majority of 'elected' members in all the councils. On paper the set-up looks like this, starting from the bottom levels:

Muluka councils.

(Equivalent to parish.)

1 chief, 2 sub-chiefs and 8 members elected by the people by acclamation at public meetings.

Gombolola council.

(Equivalent to rural district.)

Gombolola chief, all Muluka chiefs, and two unofficial representatives elected by each Muluka council.

Saza council.

(Equivalent to county.)

1 saza chief, all gombolola chiefs, 1 muluka chief from each gombolola, and 3 unofficial representatives elected by each gombolola council.

District council.

The Prime Minister, the Treasurer, all saza chiefs, 1 additional chief elected by each saza council, and 3 unofficials chosen by each saza council; plus 5 others selected by the rest of the council on their merits as individuals.

All this looks complicated, but it is squarely based on an indigenous structure which the people know and understand. What is new to them is the whole principle of representation and government by the

## A BLOODLESS REVOLUTION

people. These reforms forge a direct chain from the humblest village council to the highest body in the kingdom, up which any man so minded, who gains the confidence of his fellows, may climb. It replaces the sovereign authority of the king by the constitutional authority of the district council.

A bloodless revolution, in fact. British authority seems to have brought about quite painlessly in Uganda what it took us in England many disturbances and major civil wars, a change of dynasty and about seven centuries to achieve, and what has generally been achieved in other countries—when it has—only after prolonged upheavals of the bloodiest and most ruthless kind. And the British have brought it about, as usual, without breathing a word of it to the outside world.

The Prime Minister of Ankole, a member of the ruling caste, did not seem disturbed by the obvious implications for men of his kind of such a deep reform. So far, he said, things seemed to be going well, but it was early days yet; only one meeting of the district council had been held. The agenda, suggested by the members, was varied: the admission of women members, the need for more dispensaries, over-lenient treatment of thieves by magistrates, a proposal that a fee should be charged for the ferry, the care of orphans, the raising to 60/- of the fine for putting a girl in the family way.

When I asked what he considered to be the most pressing topic in Ankole at the moment, the Prime Minister replied without hesitation: "Cattle. Our cattle are dying, and they are not getting proper treatment. They must be saved."

It is indeed true that the cattle are dying. In the last few years their numbers, here in Ankole, have fallen from 220,000 head to 178,000, and they are still falling.

The reason is the spread of tsetse. These open rolling pastures round Mbarara, so inviting to livestock, seem no less so to the fly. Two kinds of tsetse are advancing from two different directions: *pallidipes*, the thick-bush-dwelling species, from the north and west, and *morsitans*, which favours more open country, from the south. A gap, in places only about 20 miles wide, now separates the two; if it closes, almost the whole of Ankole will be lost, and the cattle route from the west to the markets of the east will no longer be open.

A new 'battle of the gap' is being fought, with bush-clearing as the defensive weapon. The issue is in the balance; and, at this critical stage, the enemy has produced a secret weapon which may compel the forces of science to revise their whole strategy.



## UGANDA

The basis of 'discriminative clearing', as the Shinyanga men had explained, is to drive out the tsetse fly by altering its habitat. Now they have discovered that the trypanosome can be carried by flies other than the tsetse; for instance by the ordinary horse-fly which pays no attention to density of bush and late burning and the other measures of the tsetse-fighters.

These flies can carry the trypanosome only for a short time and only over short distances. They are not hosts of the parasite. Even so, this 'mechanical transmission', as it is called, can and does defeat attempts to seal off areas of infection. The horse-fly crosses fly-free barriers, and if it carries the infection with it and then bites a beast on the other side, not only will that beast die, but any 'clean' tsetses which feed on its blood will themselves become infected. And so the disease leaps all barriers and spreads quickly.

This discovery has shaken the scientists. No wonder that the people of Ankole are worried.

"We want proper treatment for our cattle," repeated the Prime Minister—who, as befits a notable, has large, but now dwindling, herds. He was referring to the drug phenanthridinum. The vets intend to use this more widely when they can get more supplies, but they doubt its effectiveness in places where cattle are constantly being re-infected.

The attitude of the Prime Minister, almost certainly echoed by most of his people, could be summed up in one sentence:

'Democratic councils are very nice, but they don't stop our cattle dying'. And a remedy for 'tryps' would make a stronger appeal than universal suffrage.

One mile from the Kakitumba bridge, where Uganda, Tanganyika and Ruanda meet, the Uganda Government maintains a camp where all those who cross over from Ruanda must come for a free night's lodging and medical inspection. This camp is run by a Baganda doctor and staff. The books show that between two and three thousand outward-bound labour-seekers are going through every month and four or five hundred are returning, and this is the slack time of year.

I arrived at Kakitumba in the evening to find the camp about half full. Groups of ill-clad Banyaruanda were squatting round fires in the open, watching the evening meal simmering in black pots. Doctor and clerk led me round the clean, thatched sheds where each family party stakes out a claim on a bit of the cement floor and, surrounded by a litter of food, blankets, pots and gourds, settles down for the night.

## 'WE LOVE YOU, WE CLEANSE YOU'

When we came to the de-lousing department the light of battle came into the eyes of the small, alert, enthusiastic clerk.

"First, I give them a propaganda talk," he said; and, whisking off his desk a couple of test tubes containing dead lice, he ran through his piece. With the gusto of an actor in melodrama he detailed the life history of the body louse, its evil nature, its dire effects; he extolled the virtues of cleanliness and the beneficence of fumes; he vowed that no bad magic was mixed up with the treatment, that their clothing would come back to them unharmed.

"And then I say: 'We British like you Banyaruanda, we welcome you! That is why we give you food, we give you shelter, we kill your lice. We love you, we cleanse you! Come this way, friends, this way, on that side the women, on this the men.' And they go gladly, they are no longer frightened; for you understand, these people are not civilised like Baganda, they are only savages."

Through this clerk, who knows their tongue, I asked several of the travellers why they had left their homes.

"Because we have little food," they answered. "There is much food in Uganda."

"Because I was made to work too much by the chief, and beaten when I refused," put in one lanky young man; and added:

"We go to Uganda because it is good."

"What is good about it?"

"*Everything* is good. I shall not return to Ruanda."

The truth of the matter is that this comparatively small and once exceedingly fertile patch of Africa, Ruanda-Irundi—formerly part of German East Africa but detached from it after the 1914-18 war and handed to Belgium under mandate—is grossly over-crowded. The population is reckoned to be nearly  $3\frac{1}{2}$  millions: that is, almost as many people are crowded into the 15,000 square miles of Ruanda as are spread out over the 94,000 square miles of Uganda. There are no industries to draw people off the mountainous land. The result has been as one might have expected.

Two years ago a drought came. Crops failed and, while thousands died, thousands more trekked to the green and fertile lands of Uganda. (People were shocked by the living skeletons they saw struggling along the roads, in some cases to die by the wayside.) The trek goes on. Last year, 140,000 people entered the Protectorate from Ruanda and only 4,000 went back.

This is one of those spontaneous mass movements of population that takes place at intervals in history to correct some new pressure. There

## UGANDA

is little the Belgians can do to improve conditions for these squeezed-up, ill-nourished people, except to encourage emigration as—wisely—they are doing. It is fortunate that Uganda still has empty land and needs labour. But how long will these conditions last, with the curve of Uganda's own population steadily rising?

Sooner or later, the Protectorate will put up 'House full' notices, and what then? (Ankole has already done so.) Presumably the Belgians will find themselves face to face with the same alternatives as confront the British in parts of Kenya and Tanganyika: on the one hand industrialisation plus birth control, on the other increasing poverty, starvation and discontent. If all that one hears is correct, they have been a great deal more successful than we have been in fostering industries in the Congo proper, though not, as yet, in Ruanda. As in British territories, birth control is an untouched field. No doubt their difficulties would be even greater than ours because of the stronger influence of Roman Catholic Missions.

## KABALE

I arrived after dark, and awoke next morning to a new scene. A thick white mist lay over the grass and lifted gradually to reveal a landscape of ridge after steep-sided ridge, rising one after the other to infinity. Hostile territory to a pilot: there does not seem to be a space flat enough to make a football field, let alone a forced landing.

There is a crispness, a brilliance in the air that speaks of altitude. Kabale itself is over 6,000 feet and those towering red ridges run up to 8,500 feet or more. The land looks fertile and smiling. Gardens are full of roses, the lawns Irish green. Yet the annual rainfall averages only 38 inches. The secret lies in distribution. There is no month without rain, which generally falls with gentle uniformity and not in wasteful torrents, and morning mists help to keep the vegetation moist and lively.

After breakfast, I set out with the Agricultural Officer to see a part of Kigezi. Red roads coil and zigzag round precipitous hillsides in a most accomplished manner, yet no engineers made them.

"These people," Mr. Purseglove said, "have a natural eye for contour almost as accurate as a level. The contour strips are pegged by eye, and my instructors are seldom out by more than a few inches."

Whole hillsides are under cultivation, from the narrow swampy bottoms almost to the precipitous crests, and all laid out in pocket-handkerchief plots. One wonders why the women do not slide off the hillsides while they are hoeing. Nevertheless there is a pattern to the

## VIRTUES OF STRIP-CROPPING

scene. The plots are ribbed at close intervals by strips of elephant-grass.

"There is no soil erosion," said Mr. Purseglove firmly.

At first this seemed incredible. In so many other parts of Africa, cultivation on slopes much milder than these has disposed of nearly all the topsoil. But he would not be shaken. He gave two reasons for Kigezi's immunity: the soil's natural resistance, and the practice of strip-cropping, combined with the planting of elephant-grass wash-stops along the contour of the hills. (Strip-cropping, as its name implies, consists in planting your crops in narrow parallel strips on the contour, to prevent soil wash.)

In other parts of Africa people have talked about strip-cropping for years, but in Kigezi they really do it—not just here and there but for miles and miles, on ridge after ridge, from top to base. How has it happened?

"Propaganda," said Mr. Purseglove. "Constant propaganda. We work it like this. I hold a nine-day course for a group of chiefs. Back they go, and each chief in turn calls out all his cultivators for a day's party. A couple of my instructors go along. With their help, everyone turns to and pegs out contour lines, and after this every man must keep this line—generally he plants elephant-grass—even if it runs right through the middle of his shamba."

The utter treelessness of this country is its defect. A generation or two ago these hillsides were cloaked in fine natural forest, but the industrious Bakiga have razed it all, save for an occasional little patch spared for some magical reason. To find firewood is, perhaps, the tribesmen's greatest problem, and many families make do with the rhizomes of elephant-grass or papyrus. Tree planting is an idea that does not seem to have occurred to even the most up-and-coming African tribes.

"The richer a man is," said the A.O., "the farther he lives up the hill. A rich man has several wives to fetch water, so he can afford to live farther from the stream."

Each of the homesteads, the usual cluster of round thatched huts, was equipped with an extra baby hut not usually to be found in the African 'village'.

"You see—a latrine to every home," said Mr. Purseglove proudly. "We feel we've made real headway there."

This was even more remarkable than the wash-stops. Except in the homes of a tiny minority privies are, throughout East Africa, still almost unknown, and diseases whose spread could be checked by

## UGANDA

simple hygiene—hookworm, amœbic dysentery, bilharzia—are rampant everywhere.

"People can be summonsed before the native court for not having a proper twenty-foot latrine in good order," said the A.O., "and to start with, some of them were. Now it's seldom necessary. I guarantee that if you walked from one end of Kigezi to the other you'd find hardly any offenders."

Why should this extreme south-western corner of Uganda, remote from towns and Secretariats and other foci of progress, be so far in advance of so many places in the art of better living? Mr. Purseglove's explanation was the close and uninterrupted team-work between the D.C., himself and the doctor. Team-work, however, is not a monopoly of Kigezi's, and the Bakiga must surely be an especially amenable people.

"They take a lot of convincing," Mr. Purseglove said, "but once they *are* convinced, they'll do a thing and see it through."

Two factors, perhaps, have influenced their outlook. One is the chiefs' readiness to co-operate. Like most mountain-dwellers, the Bakiga had no hereditary system of rulers and the first British administrators brought in 'foreign' chiefs from Buganda. This worked better than might have been expected, and in due course the 'foreigners' were replaced by natives whom they had trained. Because the people were not tied down by hereditary allegiance to ruling families or castes, they were able to pick the best men for the job, and, it seems, did so. The chiefs are poorly paid (a gombolola chief may get as little as 50/- a month, and no more than 130/-) but they are energetic and keen, and, perhaps because they are not severed from the people by blood or pride or wealth, they seem to have the people's confidence.

The other factor is the climate's healthiness. At this altitude there is no malaria or bilharzia and for other reasons little venereal disease.

Unchecked by disease, the population has so multiplied as to raise the average numbers per square mile from 86 in 1928 to 155 in 1944. In other words the population has doubled itself in 16 years. Not all of this is due to natural increase. Many families from Ruanda settled here, until in 1943 the Government stopped all immigration. But over one-third of the whole population consists of children under ten, and calculations show that at the present rate, and without any more immigration, the tribe's numbers will double in the next 30 years.

There is no more room in Kigezi. Not only that, there is no room for the existing population, which in 1944 had reached a density of 717 people to the square mile in the most crowded places. This means

## AFRICAN SETTLERS

that each family has an average of only  $4\frac{1}{2}$  acres on which to cultivate, build a homestead, graze animals and rest the soil. (In 1936, each had over 10 acres.) So land is being cropped year after year without grass leys, without fallows, and yields are dropping.

"Somehow we have got to move off about one-third of the whole population of Kigezi," said the A.O.

We had halted behind two lorries to talk to a party of Bakiga assembled under some gum trees. Each man stood over an assortment of bundles: blankets, cooking pots, food, the usual mixed bag. These were emigrants about to start on their adventure. They looked phlegmatically cheerful. Two chiefs were there to see them off, superior in trousers, sun-helmets and fly-whisks.

"It was touch and go at first," said Mr. Purseglove, "and I wouldn't have believed that within a year we should have had to put the brake on emigration."

Mr. Mathias and Mr. Purseglove, the D.C. and A.O. respectively, spent many days searching for new land. They looked at much that was too hot and unhealthy for a tribe of mountain-dwellers, but at last they hit upon a large tract of country, about 70 miles from Kabale and quite uninhabited, on the upper reaches of an escarpment sloping down to the Lake Edward flats. The Bakiga had hitherto avoided it partly because the game, pressing up the wooded valleys, destroyed their crops, partly because of its reputation for evil spirits.

A year was devoted to propaganda. Up and down the country, ideas were planted in people's minds. How many children had this man got? Six? Good; but where would his sons find land? Was the father's plot big enough to hold them? Of course not. Was any land lying idle? No? Then what would become of the sons? Had the Bakiga themselves not come here from Ruanda several generations ago? Were men of to-day less bold than their fathers? The A.O. held brief courses for chiefs and sub-chiefs to bring home to them the dire fate of land persistently over-cropped—their land. The chiefs went back impressed. Then a new suggestion was made. Would some of the chiefs and people like to look at this new land?

A few agreed. Game scouts shot buffalo for a meat dinner, and several parties looked out over the promised land from the shelter of a lone tree standing on a spur of the hills and called 'the dancing floor of the virgins'.

The turning-point came when two of the most influential chiefs decided to trust the Government and back the scheme. They called for volunteers. The D.C. built huts for the settlers to live in until their

## UGANDA

own were ready, arranged to feed them until after the first harvest, provided free transport and stationed game scouts there to shoot buffalo and pig. For the rest, people had to fend for themselves.

Less than a year ago, the pioneers moved out. In theory each man could peg 12 acres, but in practice he was left alone to do as he pleased.

"If we had bothered them with a lot of rules and regulations," Mr. Purseglove said, "they would have turned against the scheme. So we made only two rules: that they must cultivate along the contour, and that they must dig pit latrines. The rest can follow later: next year strip-cropping will be brought in."

The first action of the pioneers was to build a small round cage in the bush for their chickens. These folk use poultry as a man exploring underground will use a flame: if the birds flourish all is well, but if they die it means that malign forces are about.

"It was extremely lucky for us," said Mr. Purseglove, "that those chickens did well. If anything had happened to them, the whole scheme might have flopped."

To-day over 3,000 volunteers are settled, the vanguard of about 20,000, and the total cost has come to little over £2,000. This must be one of the cheapest and most efficiently run resettlement projects in the whole of Africa.

Less than a year ago, no sign of human life marked these ridges; elephant and buffalo, roan antelope and waterbuck kept the wooded gulleys and the grassy slopes. To-day the eye picks out clusters of shambas, and many round thatched roofs, and smoke rising from burning piles of vegetation. Outside a rough new hut, a woman was grinding sorghum on her quern; hens were picking round the clearing and from a patch of bush some men clasping billhooks emerged.

They were pleased, they said, with the land. Work was hard but you could see profit, and there was plenty of firewood and good clear springs; but they missed their cattle and feared lest their children should get malaria. Cattle cannot be brought in because the gulleys are full of tsetse, but when the bush is cleared these are expected to go. The game has gone already to the plains below. To mourn this retreat is sentimental; even on the æsthetic plane, no doubt St. Paul's Cathedral is nobler than the swamps and forests which preceded it; nevertheless a herd of horned impala springing up like a rufous fountain has more beauty than a Bakiga woman stooping to her hoe, an elephant more grandeur than a tame goat.

Walking back to the car we passed a party of young men preparing

## THE BIRUNGA VOLCANOES

for a wild pig hunt with spears, knives and a rabble of sad-looking dogs. Everyone was friendly and in high spirits, but an English-speaking ex-teacher who has been put in charge of this resettlement inquired:

"Is this for the benefit of the African or the European?"

The answer seemed to me obvious, and I said so. The young man looked dubious, and added:

"The people know this is their country, and they do not want anyone to take it from them."

Suspicion has roots deeper than bindweed, but nowhere could it be less justified, and one cannot believe that it thrives among the peasants. Yet, were conditions favourable, how quickly it would germinate!

The weak point of all this lies in the future. What is to be the end? New land is not inexhaustible. The people increase at a geometrically progressive rate. Resettlement is a palliative, not a cure. What happens when all the empty land is filled? The Kigezi team has no answer; it is not their business. An answer will be demanded—sooner, perhaps, than many people calculate.

We drove back along a spectacular road over the mountains, with a sheer drop of perhaps three or four hundred feet on one side. As we climbed steadily higher, twisting and turning among the passes, forest reappeared. We looked down on to a dark-green canopy, and up at a tangle of thick roots hacked into by the road-makers. Once we were halted by a whisk of white, and stopped to watch a Colobus monkey spring from one tree to another with an easy grace beyond the range of the most skilled trapeze artist. He sat quietly on his new perch, his long white tail hanging down like a pendulum, beautiful in his thick fur with its broad bull's-eye stripes—a prince among monkeys.

Now the rain came on. We crept cautiously round hairpin bends, glancing down now and again to see the creamy glint of a river foaming below. Red runnels of water scoured the greasy surface. Once a fallen tree halted us, and men appeared from hidden dwellings at the bottom of the valley, clambering up the hillside with the agility of goats. Each clasped his billhook, as much a part of his normal equipment as the office worker's fountain pen, and in a very little while the way was clear.

Our road climbed now to a saddle between two deep valleys and from its pommel, over 8,000 feet up, we could see at last the volcanoes. They lie in a long chain across Ruanda-Irundi, and on a clear day one can count most of the ten peaks which make up the Birunga range of mountains.



## UGANDA

It was not a clear day, and we missed the grand spectacle; but clouds and rain brought the wild and fabulous beauty of a Turner landscape to the scene. Now one of the volcanoes, now another, half-emerged from a far bank of lavender cloud and floated mistily in a soft evening light. Only a tremulous outline could be apprehended, as through a veil, and a moment later, when your wandering gaze returned, even that outline had merged into a cloudy ocean.

The native names for all these peaks have a meaning. Muhabura, at one end of the range, 'he who shows the way', is the holy place of the Banyaruanda, where souls are brought after death for judgment, and the good ones remain to drink the beer and smoke the tobacco of the gods while the bad ones are flung into the crater. Another is called 'the father of teeth', and a third 'the hairs'—a reference, perhaps, to its giant groundsel and lobelias. The tallest of all is Karisumbi, 14,805 feet, 'the place of cowrie shells'.

These volcanoes are not extinct. Only ten years ago, one of them sprang to life and poured its lava into Lake Kivu. Their origins go back to a time before the earth knew human life, when the great rift valleys were formed by faulting, and these Birunga mountains were forced up from the floor of the western rift to form a barrier which dammed a river then flowing into Lake Edward. The trapped river grew into a lake, the present Kivu, which in course of time over-flowed into Lake Tanganyika.

As we watched, the slopes of the mountains continually solidified and dissolved as the misty lilac cloud thickened or drew aside to display for a few moments their pencilled outlines. On all sides lay infinity, precipices, towering lonely hills and deep silent valleys: a tortured, fantastic landscape, crumpled and slashed by the mighty convulsions of planetary labour before ever life emerged; and even now, the subject of slow unmeasured forces which will continue to mould the earth's crust into new patterns long after man, that dubious parasitic species, has disappeared.

"You must meet Miss Hornby," Mr. Purseglove said. "She's as much one of our institutions as the volcanoes."

The house was in darkness when we called, but she emerged from cake-baking in the kitchen and carried a lamp into the small book-littered sitting-room. In the shadows we could see that its furniture was simple and home-made, the floor of cement, with a worn carpet; the weak rays of the oil lamp could not reach through the rafters of a ceilingless roof into the thatch. Hard things are sometimes said of

## MISS HORNBY

missionaries, but I have yet to see the Mission whose officers enjoy anything but the simplest and most frugal kind of existence.

"I have been in Kabale for twenty-five years," Miss Hornby said, "and in Africa for thirty-three." A quarter-century in one place; how many officials she has seen come and go, transient as swallows, how much closer she can approach to the minds and hearts of the people! Their language comes as readily to her tongue as her own.

Miss Hornby—a small, grey-haired, eager, wiry woman—is in charge of the education of girls in Kigezi. She was also its pioneer. Twenty-five years ago not only did no girls attend school, but respectable fathers were horrified at the suggestion that any should. For seven months after her arrival she tramped the back-breaking hills and swampy villages trying to wring from distrustful fathers permission to borrow just one daughter.

Gradually, here and there, she gathered a little band, but these girls were given to her, not lent; the fathers, regarding the whole thing as an exaction of tribute, washed their hands of its victims. And so, when Miss Hornby was summoned to England, she found herself with a school-full of girls who could no more go home than a collection of orphans. She resolved the dilemma by marching the whole band more than a hundred miles to her nearest colleague and, when she returned from England, marching them back again.

Has 'education' brought more of good or of evil to the Bakiga? Looking back over 25 years, to the time of uncorroded tribalism, this Christian pioneer sees that both sides of the balance are weighted.

"To-day people are much cleaner and healthier. Lice were everywhere then, people crawled with them. The woman would go off at sunrise with her baby on her back and work all day in the fields; at nightfall she'd return with a heavy load of firewood and start to cook; no wonder her person, her children, her hut, were filthy. To-day she still works hard, but life is not quite such a grinding labour.

"They're healthier, and they have greater opportunities. Then, a man had no choice but to be a peasant; to-day, if he sticks to his schooling, he can train as a teacher, a doctor, a clerk. Life is less cramped, there are wider horizons. But . . ."

But, she was thinking, these are in the main (though not wholly) material things. It is hard to describe in words the softening of the moral fibre of a people, the dissolution of their ethics, and harder still for a missionary to admit what, I believe, many missionaries feel, that the Christian vision has not hitherto replaced the pagan yet valid morality of the tribe.

## UGANDA

Of old the Bakiga observed, for instance, a strict code of sexual morals.

"There was no adultery." A sweeping claim; but it was the custom for girls found pregnant to be hurled over a waterfall. Miss Hornby related how, in the early days, some converts carried from a swamp a young girl dying of starvation and exposure. She had been cast out by her parents, and it proved that her supposed pregnancy was in reality a tumorous swelling.

Such ruthless sanctions, cruel as they were, involved self-discipline, and preserved intact the family as the core of tribal life. Now both things are dissolving.

"Immorality is rampant, the sense of obligation to family and tribe has gone. People think first of themselves. Last year three of our women teachers here became pregnant, and we had to suspend our senior master, a Makerere man, for seducing a pupil of fourteen."

Here is a constant bone of contention between Missions and their educated staff. The young men and women claim that their sexual behaviour is their own private affair. The Missions, for their part, feel unable to connive at the loose living of teachers and clergy whose example the children will follow. To set up one standard for white missionaries and another for their black converts would be to deny their own teaching of spiritual equality; yet a European missionary who seduced schoolgirls and openly lived with prostitutes could scarcely be tolerated.

When tribal discipline goes out at the window, it seems, self-indulgence comes in at the door.

"It seems odd to say so, but I think education has gone too fast. Or perhaps it has not been the right education. We have one hundred and seventy girls at this school, and I am the only European teacher. Every one of them will get married and bring up children of her own. The thing that matters most is that they should learn how to bring up children well. Yet only last year, the Education department did away with domestic science in the secondary course, and substituted geometry. That's all very well. . . . Even to-day, I know of only twenty-six homes in the whole of Kigezi where I would be glad to stay, knowing I'd find myself with decent, clean, self-respecting families.

"But we must look to the next generation. We must pin our hopes to them. And I have faith that enough will grow up healthy, self-respecting and God-fearing to leaven the whole. . . ."

Miss Hornby still goes out on foot safaris to inspect bush schools in

## TRAINING EX-SOLDIERS

remote places, clambering up mountains and wading flooded rivers. Recently, on the borders of the Belgian Congo, she noticed that the walls of a school had been freshly plastered with dung. Knowing that the people kept no cattle, she asked where it came from. It was buffalo dung. On the way back, she and her porters halted to allow a herd to cross the path just in front of them.

Cut off from the world by mountains, volcanoes, 'the impenetrable forest' and open country dominated by enemies, the people of Kigezi kept themselves very much to themselves until the war sucked out some of the young men. Now these are returning, and 'reabsorption' is a problem here as elsewhere.

Uganda has de-centralised its ex-soldier's training, and aims more at turning out the rough village craftsman than the semi-skilled tradesman. Here at Kabale African instructors, themselves not very skilled, teach a score of men the rudiments of carpentry, tanning, tailoring and pottery.

The place looks crude and the teaching casual, yet the idea is sound. To use a proper skill, the young men would have to seek jobs elsewhere, but as rough carpenters or tailors they can find plenty of work among their own people in their own homes—that is, if they are content with small returns.

"The trouble is," said the man in charge of 'reabsorption', "that they'd rather sell one chair for fifty shillings and do nothing for the rest of the month, than turn out five chairs for ten shillings each."

The potters are to go out in teams, with their wheels, to make rough earthenware mugs, jugs and dishes that will sell at 20 cents each and, it is hoped, replace the gourds in general use. And the tanners will make leather shorts to replace the untanned and lice-harboursing goat-skin, or expensive imported drill, using local materials only—lime from the nearby tile-works, wattle from the hills and castor oil from the shambas. If, in time, the male population strides over the hills in leather shorts, Kigezi will wear a most Bavarian air. It remains to be seen whether the new fashion, and the earthenware mugs and wooden tables, will catch on.

It is pleasant to go about the country and find one's eye solaced by attractive Roman-tiled roofs instead of repelled by corrugated iron; and fascinating to watch the dough-like clay rolled out like pastry, sprinkled with a handful of brick-dust and patted down over a curved mould by the staff of the Native Authority's little tile-works. Local *fundis* trained by the White Fathers are building new headquarters and

## UGANDA

houses for the gombolola chiefs, of whom there are 31. The intention is to replace all the present makeshift habitations with semi-permanent tile-roofed buildings of brick and plaster.

Here no permits and shortages throttle enterprise. The soil yields clay and limestone, the hills wattle poles; home-made lime mortar replaces imported cement—everything is local and to hand. With unskilled labour hired at 10/- a month, and semi-skilled labour at about three times that figure, costs are wonderfully low and progress wonderfully rapid. (The cost of the tiles works out at about 12 for a shilling.) These gombolola headquarters are the most unpretentious and pleasant I have yet seen, and their surroundings magnificent.

The waterfall which once tossed erring maidens to their death now turns the wheels of a flax factory, and a stench of rotting straw pollutes the little valley.

Before 1939 these fertile hills sent nothing out: everything grown here was eaten locally. And the Bakiga peasant had little chance to earn even the few shillings needed to buy the simplest things—tea and sugar, a pair of shorts, a lamp, a comb—or to pay taxes.

Then came the need for war production even in remote Kigezi, and flax was selected as the likeliest crop. The Government, taking something of a gamble, imported machinery from Northern Ireland together with a man to run it.

This expert had a hard struggle. Not a single person in all Kigezi had ever seen flax machinery, or for that matter any machinery, in action before. He had to train his labour from the very foundation. Now men at the scutching machines hold the long horse-hair bundles against a whirring shaft with a dexterity that looks impressive, at any rate to the uninitiated. These are ordinary local Bakiga who, the manager said, work an eight-hour day without flagging and like the monotonous but comparatively well-paid work. He is the sole European and the sole expert, yet a high proportion of his flax qualifies for top grades in an exacting English market. He spoke highly of the teachability of the Bakiga. For him, used to the bustle of Belfast, life must be lonely in this far-off valley, 20 miles or so from his nearest European neighbour and a hundred from a town of any size.

The flax is grown in little bits and pieces: a quarter of an acre is about an average plot. The cultivator sends in his bundle of ripe straw on his wife's head, and is paid a flat rate of a few cents a pound. Probably he makes no more than ten or fifteen shillings a year out of his crop, but even that is welcome: at least it will help to pay his annual tax of 13/-.

## LAKE BUNYONI

The only other cash crop he can grow is high-nicotine tobacco, for which two factories operate. (Coffee was introduced, but had to be abandoned because the bug *antestia* got out of control.)

Few Bakiga families earn a yearly cash income of more than twenty-five or thirty shillings and half of this sum goes in taxation. The local millionaires are the ex-soldiers, who were paid fabulous sums while serving, and when they left presented with a fortune that passed the wildest dreams of the richest cultivator. The chief result, here as elsewhere, was to inflate enormously the price of cattle.

In this whole region, with its 300,000 people, last year's output of flax and nicotine, the only two exports, were together worth only £6,000. To increase production will be slow and difficult. As pressure of population rises, it becomes harder than ever for the peasant to spare even a quarter of an acre for a crop to be sold and not eaten, although his need for cash is great.

The testing of these two crops took place on the Government's experimental farm a few miles out of Kabale, and others are being tried to-day which may prove of equal benefit in future. (For instance sun-flowers, rich in the fat so lacking in Bakiga diets.)

This must surely be one of the steepest and the most beautiful experimental farms in the world. From its upper levels you look down over Lake Bunyoni cupped in mountains, its forest-fringed margin serrated like a torn leaf. Mats of hyacinth-blue water-lilies cover its many creeks and inlets, and its quiet waters are the home of otters. Oddly enough, it contained no fish until they were transplanted. The explanation seems to be that Bunyoni is an accident, formed in comparatively recent times by an eruption of lava which dammed a river. At the north end of the lake we drove across a swamp which gives birth to a stream, and this in turn flows into Lake Edward: so that the beautiful Bunyoni is one of the ultimate sources of the Nile.

The climate of Kigezi is so kindly that experts believe that two years of grass to four years of cultivation can safely be recommended, instead of the usual half-and-half rotation.

We panted up the steepest of hills, looking at plots with a moral: plots where maize had been grown year after year until the plants were sad and stunted, plots where maize following grass was all that maize could possibly be; plots manured and unmanured; plots strip-cropped and not strip-cropped; all, one may hope, convincing and impressive to visiting peasant, if not always for reasons we should approve.

To him, the European has a field of good maize and a field of bad; nothing could be more likely; no one ever doubted that the European

## UGANDA

held powerful medicines to bless crops or to blast them. It is almost impossible, even for these amenable and virtuous Bakiga, to believe that anything so trivial as the planting of grass or the placing of dung can lie at the bottom of it all.

And native medicine is not all superstition. The tireless Mr. Purseglove has a collection of plants used by local witchdoctors which numbers over a hundred species.

"This little creeping daisy," he said, pointing to a common plant at our feet with tiny yellow-brown flowers, "is the native remedy for toothache. Chemical analysis shows that it really does contain a local anæsthetic. And one of the pygmy arrow-poisons in my collection contains a cardiac glucoside which I believe to be new to science.

"There is," he added, "a fertile and as yet barely touched field for research in the study of these African medicines."

The White Horse Inn is a surprise; you do not look for such a high standard of comfort in such a distant place. In the heyday of the tourist industry, Kabale was on the beaten track to the famous *Parc National* of the Belgian Congo, with its rare okapi and gorillas.

The white-haired, fresh-complexioned proprietress moves energetically behind the scenes and in front of them, cooking food, inspecting rooms and chivvying guests in to meals, for the bad East African habit of lingering for hours over drinks and dining at nine-thirty or even later is not tolerated here. Some visitors mutter about regimentation, but the management's view, that if the staff take the trouble to prepare good food the guests must take the trouble to eat it punctually, seems reasonable.

All the staff, now grown men, took service as untutored children when the Adamsons first came to this then unheard-of spot to build up their enterprise from the bare ground. Now, instead of rough rondavels with packing-case furniture, the stone-built rooms have private baths and electric light: small things, no doubt, but an individual's achievement.

So Mrs. Adamson was clearly piqued when one of the guests, an oilman from the Middle East *en route* for the Congo, sitting at his ease by the fire after an excellent dinner, exclaimed:

"And to think that all this was made out of the natives!"

Mrs. Adamson was goaded into a vigorous defence.

"Do you think they could do this for themselves? Every boy I've got I trained myself from a raw *toto*. And even now—last week I caught my head-boy pouring the contents of a flower-vase into the

## SIXTY ELEPHANTS BEFORE BREAKFAST

drinking-water jug because he couldn't be bothered to fetch clean water from the filter-tank!

"A few months ago the Indian duka got in a batch of bicycles. My boys came to me in a body and asked me to buy them one each—asked *me* because they thought I'd see that the Indian didn't cheat them. And the bicycles cost fifteen pounds each. How many natives in Kigezi could produce fifteen pounds in cash? My boys get better pay than the chiefs. We've worked to make this hotel, worked very hard for fifteen years, and now that we've succeeded, the African is sharing the benefits. . . . Who's made money out of whom?"

The oil-man was silenced, but his eye retained the glitter of an *idée fixe*: exploitation.

There is good food at the White Horse Inn, and (although it is licensed) no bar.

## KICHWAMBA

From the misty hilltops and hairpin bends of Kabale we dropped gently to the open rolling pastures of western Ankole, green now and fresh after rain. Here and there we passed a herd of cattle, fine beasts with a hint of Ayrshire about them, whose long sweeping horns made an interlaced design against the horizon. Thin youths, like stakes thrust into the turf, stood solitary guard over the cattle.

Ankole ends in an escarpment, and directly you start to descend it the country wears a hotter look, more tropical, more airless, and clumps of plaintain trees appear beside the road.

Kichwamba, a cluster of dukas and a small hotel, lies near the foot of the escarpment and looks out over the plains and over Lake Edward. The game reserve runs up to the bottom of the garden. Before breakfast, standing on the terrace, we watched a herd of about 60 elephants browsing on the tops of thorn trees below us, a couple of hundred yards away.

The evening before, I had gone with the acting Game Ranger and his wife across a ferry to the other side of the Kasingo channel that links Lake George with Lake Edward. Within two hundred yards of the road a herd of buffalo, black in the evening light, grazed in open formation as unconcernedly as cows. A little further on an elephant stood so close that we could have hit him with a stone from our halted car. He raised huge wrinkled ears inquiringly, pivoted slowly on his hind legs and ambled on, swinging his trunk, indifferent to our existence, dark as a rock in the gathering dusk.

In his early days as an impoverished planter, the days when ivory



## UGANDA

poaching was a sport and a career, 'Samaki' Salmon took to the great game of elephant hunting. Now he is a Game Ranger his task is, in theory, to protect wild life, but in fact a great part of it is elephant destruction, for the Uganda Game department slaughters about one thousand a year because they threaten or damage native shambas. Mr. Salmon entrusts this doubtless needful butchery to 24 African scouts, to whose training he devotes immense care and patience. In spite of this heavy slaughter it is believed that the total elephant population of Uganda is not falling. But almost all the good ivory has been shot out.

Like many of those whose business is with animals, he has kept almost every kind as a pet. Lion cubs are among the most endearing. One of his cubs was reared by a bull-terrier bitch. When it grew too big to be disciplined by cuffing or snarling, the bitch would lift its lip and bite it on the gum, and it would crawl away into a corner, whimpering, and never attempt to answer back.

His strangest experience concerned two tame, grown-up lions presented to the National Park in the Belgian Congo, where, it was hoped, they would be able to live out their lives in natural freedom.

Mr. Salmon took the lions, a male and a female, to the Park and released them, leaving a tethered sheep to tide them over until they grew accustomed to hunting.

A week later, he returned. He found both lions where he had left them, thin as rails and desperate with hunger; and they were playing with the sheep. They did not know how to kill it; indeed, they did not seem to know that sheep were meant to be killed.

Again he let a week go by, and returned. This time lions and sheep alike were gone. After a search he found the lioness; she had mated with a wild lion, and he had taught her to hunt. There was no trace of the tame lion.

"I am convinced he had died of starvation. I never saw the lioness again after that. She may have survived, or the wild lion may have put her in whelp and then deserted her, probably leaving her to perish too."

From this it appears that 'instinct' may not always be instinct at all—something inherent and inborn—but only education, imparted at a very early age and by means we do not understand.

On this side of Lake Edward the shore is flat and swampy, but on the Congo side mountains whose peaks reach nearly to ten thousand feet rise straight out of the water, in places so steeply that it is hard to

## NATIVE FISHERMEN

find a land-fall even for canoes. Strangely enough, although Lake Edward teems with fish and hippo, it is innocent of crocodiles. Yet in Lake Albert, farther north, to which it is linked by the Semliki river, both crocodiles and Nile perch (also absent from Lake Edward) abound. This is a puzzle which has exercised the scientific mind. The explanation favoured by Dr. Worthington, a student of these lakes, is that a series of rapids on the Semliki, combined with heavy forest at the sides, has prevented either fish or crocodiles from making their way upstream.

### KATWE

Down on the plain, in a trough between two great mountain ranges—on the floor of the western rift—it is baking hot. The waters of Lake Edward lap against a bare shore. They support a considerable native fishing industry, whose other element is the salt won from a crater lake nearby.

The crude dug-out canoes go out at dawn, with a little broom or a bunch of feathers at the prow to keep off evil spirits. The fishermen shoot their nets, and at high noon paddle back over the steely waters to a waiting group of women who, in the hot sun and on the bare ground, gut the wriggling catch. (*Tilapia*, mostly, and the ill-favoured, predatory lung-fish.) Men carry the gutted fish to a nearby tank where they stack it in layers with crude salt, ready for collection by Indian merchants.

At midday, the gutting-place is full of slime and stink; by nightfall, as clean as any marble slab. No human effort brings this about, but the handsome, carrion-eating marabout storks that stand their distance expectantly all through the morning, and close in when the fishers go. (Sir Harry Johnston wrote of their "mottled beaks and faces of drunkards, the scraggy necks and white plumes of dowagers".) A very African way of doing things—inelegant, perhaps, but in its own way effective.

This is a native industry, run without any planning and by individual canoe-owners. The D.C. at Fort Portal, who keeps an eye on things, is uneasy about plans to 'modernise' the Lake Edward fisheries, re-equip them, and bring them under the more efficient control of a public utility company.

"These people have been independent fishermen for generations," he said. "If this scheme goes through, they'll become employees of big monopoly. I know it will be Government-owned, run for their benefit and all that—but *they* won't run it themselves. It won't be

## UGANDA

their show." They will be better off financially, no doubt. But must we, he implied, force everyone to sell his independence for a few shillings a week?

Of course there are strong arguments on the other side. Because the men fish from dug-out canoes, they cannot get out into the middle of the lake, and only a small part of the waters can be exploited. Because the curing is dirty and inefficient, markets are limited and may fall away. There is no refrigeration and much waste. Most of the profit goes not to the fishermen but to the Indian merchants.

"I know all that," the D.C. said, prowling among the stinking fish-tanks, "but these things could be put right without handing everything over to a public utility with headquarters miles away in Kampala, under European control. These fishermen would double the number of canoes on the lake if they could only get the permits. You could solve the over-fishing trouble by supplying cheap credit to enable them to buy small motor-boats. You could give the N.A. a loan to build proper curing-tanks and perhaps instal refrigeration. To be frank, I distrust this public utility idea. . . ."

And yet—about one-seventh of the Protectorate's total area consists of water. If Uganda is to be developed, the latent wealth of these waters must be exploited no less than the resources of the land. It is certain that this wealth cannot be fully exploited by those crude go-as-you-please native methods which served well enough before Africa was sucked into the stream of world economics and world history. Two factors drive us on inexorably—both begotten, I suppose, of our wish to do good: the increase of population, which must be fed, and the call for social services, which must be fed also, and out of productivity. Like bulldozers, these two factors raze thickets of independence and prepare a way for the streamlined vehicle of progress, the state coach of monopoly.

Can the independent, ill-equipped peasant or fisherman stand up against this onslaught? The D.C., brooding anxiously over his charges, may pray that he can. Many of these District Officers, who spend their lives dealing with individuals, inherit more than any body of people I know the core of that humane tradition now called 'old-fashioned liberalism. They want to see the individual man respected and given a chance to lead his own life free of too much interference, provided he sticks to a few well-defined rules. They believe that we pay in spiritual coin for the satisfaction of bodily needs, and some fear that a time is coming when the price will be too high. But to-day's fashion is to pay it, and who can stand against the trends of history? Not, I

## TWO ELEPHANTS AT CLOSE QUARTERS

should think, the Katwe fishermen. . . . But trends work slowly, and meanwhile they still paddle their own dug-out canoes.

In the little hamlet of Kabatoro we had one of the best luncheons I enjoyed in Uganda: a fish curry with unnamed but excellent spices, mounds of rice, a plateful of not-quite-hard-boiled eggs, caraway-flavoured flapjacks, sambuzas, sliced banana, pickles, and much more besides, ending with liberal helpings of tinned apricots and cream and washed down by iced beer: a feast indeed, and quite unexpected in the middle of these empty flats, with no town of even modest size nearer than Fort Portal 80 miles away. This was an Indian fish-trader's response to a casual suggestion, as we drove through, that a bite of bread-and-cheese would be acceptable on our way back. And Dina Nath Dosaj would accept no payment.

While we were relishing our curry a white hunter and his companion from Nairobi looked in on their way to a hunting-ground beyond the game reserve. They reported an elephant standing on the road a mile or two away, and so, seizing a camera and deserting the curry, we went off to investigate. Sure enough there he was, a young bull, pulling the heart out of a borassus palm between the road and Lake Edward. We walked towards him and he paid us no attention at all, but ambled on at his own pace, tweaking a bush now and then with a fascinating expression of smug amusement. One might have been at the zoo; but the knowledge that sometimes, and quite unaccountably, these beasts will take umbrage, still gives an African game reserve more interest than Regent's Park. On this occasion the bull was as mild as a spaniel, and we returned in good order to our spiced curry and banana.

On the way to Fort Portal we stopped the car to advance, with the camera, upon another elephant. At about 50 yards Mr. Fletcher, the Fort Portal D.C., remarked:

"We'd better not go right up to that one. Look at his tail!"

This was impossible. He had nothing but a stump.

"He's come from the Belgian side," my companion added. "Over there, the young men stalk the elephants and run in with a knife to chop off their tails. They take the tails back as trophies for their girlfriends. I always feel that this might give an elephant a jaundiced view of human beings. . . ."

We walked back to the car, and the elephant went on browsing.

This Lake George game reserve is ideal for its purpose, being flattish, open, park-like and short-grassed, studded with clumps of acacias and

## UGANDA

euphorbias; it is free from the coarse, ugly elephant-grass which so banefully dominates much of Uganda's scenery. The country is pitted with curious crater lakes, like giant bomb-holes. One such is famous for the salt which has been won there for generations, and once attracted caravans of traders from great distances: for salt, in Africa, has always been more precious than gold.

From the rim we looked down on to a perfect bowl, and on to the dull surface of the water, like a dark mirror, and tinged with claret-red. All was silent; no birds called, and most of the trees were gone, leaving the red lake open to the sky.

The salt of Katwe, like the fish of Lake Edward, is taken by native effort, and in traditional native ways. The purest grade comes from a crust which forms at the edge of the water and is gathered up at the start of the day. The next grade is got by trapping water in little round ponds at the lake's edge and waiting until it evaporates, leaving behind a red deposit. The poorest grade consists of rock hacked from the lake's shallow bottom and floated back on rafts of featherweight ambatch wood.

Anyone in need of ready money can find shelter in a sort of barracks maintained by the Toro Native Authority, which controls the salt lake and takes a small royalty on every load extracted. When the salt-seeker has enough to bring in the sum he wants, he hauls his winnings to a shed, collects his money—the N.A. buys the salt by the load—and goes home. A regular salt-worker can earn good money, but few stay longer than the week or two needed to get the sum they need. Like the fishing, this is a real native industry: according to our standards, wasteful of labour, crude and inefficient, but exactly right according to theirs, yielding minimum needs for minimum effort—the servant, in fact, and not the master, of their lives.

Only a narrow ridge separates the salt lake from Lake Edward, and the N.A. camp looks down over that great smooth sheet of water to the blue hills of the Congo rising mistily beyond. Below us a party of waterbuck dozed under some flat-topped thorns, and over the horizon sprawled a herd of kob. Through glasses we could see the pig-like snout of a half-submerged hippo. Something disturbed a flock of duck, and they circled widely over the lake and settled back again, while a small flight of grey herons flapped slowly by, trailing their spidery legs; and by the margin, cormorants brooded in shallow water. A drowsy scene under a relentless sun, and one that has scarcely changed since the days when fleets of canoes would bear across the water young men with spears, bent on raiding or trading for the salt of Katwe.

## THE HIDDEN PEAKS OF RUWENZORI

### FORT PORTAL

I did not see the peaks of Ruwenzori. You would be uncommonly lucky to gain in a few days' visit rewards so long withheld from the first explorers that it was not until 1906 that the Duke of Abruzzi, at the head of a formidable expedition, reached the summit. After that, though many aspired, 20 years elapsed before a lone young Englishman, Dr. Noel Humphreys, with the scantiest of equipment, achieved the climb. Of all the great mountains of Africa this is the most cloud-hidden and historical. Men have sought it and assailed it with guesses ever since Ptolemy marked on his map, in A.D. 150, *Lunae Montes finis orientalis* as the source of the Nile.

Fort Portal lies on the eastern flank. Even though the snows are hidden you seem to feel a towering presence, your eyes are drawn towards those mighty spurs and forest-clad crevasses that roll up and away into the mists. Behind the misty curtain lie deep forests, a belt of bamboos and then a fantastic world of bog, moss, heaths draped in lichen and the queer, cabbage-topped, scaly trunks of giant groundsels.

Here the climber (so one may read) sinks knee-deep at every step into a spongy mass of rotting vegetation or flounders in stinking mud on the rim of black and icy lakes; here he clambers over fallen tree-trunks whose iron-hard branches are gloved in deep, slimy, vivid-hued moss. Sir Harry Johnston, one of the first climbers, complained that dense clouds "came rushing up the valleys like express trains one after the other, and they did not appear as vague mists, but as bodies of singular definiteness of outline. . . . You might be sitting for a few minutes in brilliant, welcome sunshine, looking at the blazing white snowfields and the minutest detail of rocks and boulders. Suddenly an awful greyish-white mass would come rushing at you and everything would be blotted out."

This intrepid naturalist, observer and politician found shelter in a dry cave under the glaciers. The micaceous nature of the rock, he noted, gave to the over-hanging roof "much the appearance of the beautiful aluminium ceiling to be seen in Sir Alma Tadema's house at St. John's Wood."

The small town of Fort Portal, with its two good tourist hotels (the telegraphic address of one of them is 'Romance') is the headquarters of the kingdom of Toro, one of the 'treaty states' with an hereditary ruler, the Mukama. The present incumbent's father was the first of these Bahima 'kings' to be baptised, and had ideas ahead of his time, for in 1897 he wrote to the C.M.S.:

"Sirs, here is very great need for ladies to come to teach our ladies",

## UGANDA

and in no time at all the ladies arrived, cycling in long skirts through the elephant-grass. A band played for 24 hours to welcome them, and was quenched only by a violent thunderstorm.

In Kasagama the king they found a model convert, who went to church every day and so far mingled with his people as to join in a game of football (though followed about the field by an attendant with an umbrella and another with a chair) and to pat mud with his own royal hands on the walls of the new church.

"King," one of the early missionaries observed, "your people are really enjoying their hard work!"

"Oh, no, they have not yet arrived at *liking* work. But they are rejoicing because this is God's house."

Kasagama lived until 1928 and his son, the present Mukama—George David Kamurasi Rukidi—succeeded him.

The native capital, Kabarole, lies a few miles from the British and Indian centre of Fort Portal. The palace, a brick house built by Kasagama, stands in its compound on top of a hill, and here we were received by the Mukama. A tall, well-dressed, good-looking man, he speaks fluent English, and greeted us with affability and charm. Were he not an African king he would, one feels sure, fill with distinction the high post of, let us say, public relations officer in the employ of one of the industrial empires.

His wife, the Omugo, has the tall, slim, shapely form of the pure-blooded but unfattened Muhima: the long-bridged nose, the neat hands and feet. Her grass-green dress set off her smooth bronze skin, and the son and heir, a plump toddler of eighteen months, behaved with the utmost circumspection. It was a charming domestic scene.

"I have just taken the Omugo for a fortnight's safari," said her husband, and added proudly: "She shot two buck."

Later, I was touched to receive a present from the Omugo of several black pots, the product of an indigenous industry which turns out a thin, brittle kind of earthenware with a most attractive lustre-like glaze.

Our audience over, the Prime Minister showed me round the offices of the Toro native government, just across the way.

"I am afraid I cannot introduce you to the Treasurer," he said. "He's just gone out to shoot an elephant."

Hunting, it appears, is one of the severest handicaps to the good government of Toro. A licence costs £50 for three elephants. With ivory at 20/- a pound it is easy to clear perhaps £200, and there is always the hope of a really big prize. And there is still buried ivory in

## INDOLENCE AND TYRANNY

these parts. A man who knows of a cache can sell it to a man with a licence, or sell the information to a man who bribes the local chief to dig up the ivory to sell it to a man who buys a licence . . . and so a racket is born.

"This ivory-hunting is a perfect curse," said the D.C. "Whenever you want to get hold of a man in a hurry, he's off on an elephant shoot. It would pay the country to pay the chiefs and N.A. officials *not* to shoot."

As it is, payment of salaries to chiefs and others makes the biggest hole in the N.A. budget. (The Mukama gets £1,200 a year and a car.) The revenue comes mainly from one-quarter of the poll-tax, and from court fines.

The courts are always busy. The usual way to get even with an enemy is to burn down his house, and arson is so common that the D.C. is experimenting with the fire-proofing of thatch. Drunkenness and theft are the next most frequent offences. Sixty per cent of the banana plantations of Toro are under the kind of plantain which goes to make beer. Before the coming of British rule, a man caught stealing bananas was speared on the spot and his body left by the wayside as a warning to others, like a dead crow. The fine of a few shillings does not act so well as a deterrent.

All in all, Toro seems to have changed little since one of the first missionaries wrote in 1900: "The fault of the women is their inherent laziness; the generality of them desire nothing so much as to sit still and do absolutely nothing"; and added, the spirit of Christian charity wearing a little thin: "They are so fond of begging, begging, begging: but when you suggest their *working*, off they go and you never see them again."<sup>1</sup> Lugard was scarcely more flattering about the men, writing of them as "a poor-spirited, defenceless lot, the spirit crushed out of them by years of tyranny."

In place of tyranny there are now schools, dispensaries, churches, excellent roads and a just administration; an elevating effect on the character of the people scarcely seems visible as yet, but such trends are slow. This year has seen the introduction of elected majorities on all the councils, on the same lines as elsewhere. Well-wishers of the Batoro hope (without, perhaps, too much confidence) that these reforms will kindle a spirit of constructive independence among the peasantry.

The Toro countryside is hilly, crumpled, fertile and thickly clad in

<sup>1</sup>*On the Borders of Pygmy Land.* Ruth B. Fisher. Marshall Bros., 1900.



## UGANDA

vegetation. To the west rise the foothills of Ruwenzori, creased every few miles by quick-flowing streams of perfect clarity, glacier-born. On the eastern side the land falls away to an altitude where euphorbias thrust their stiff dark fingers above the high coarse grass. Everywhere, in this grass, you see the bare tortured branches and the brilliant spiky flowers of the *erythrina*, which in my youth I knew, from its vermilion blossoms, as the sealing-wax tree. Its habit is to flower while the branches are quite leafless, so that nothing softens or screens the vivid red. Every afternoon, heavy thunderstorms roll up from the plains.

We seemed at first to be driving through a great plantation of bananas. The road was full of people coming into market, bunches of plantains or neatly woven baskets of sorghum and millet on their heads. The women made a gay picture as they strode along the sunlit red road in their bright printed cottons, with a background of green banana leaves. The men were more sober in what has become standard wear for the well-dressed male in Uganda: a long white *kanzu* and a tweed jacket.

Soon the shambas began to thin out, and thicker elephant-grass appeared. As we drove on the D.C. told me a story about the parish we were passing through, to illustrate some of the obstacles in the path of those bent on good works.

Hookworm is one of the curses of the country, and this particular parish was chosen as the scene of an experimental campaign. Eradication of hookworm is simple: you just dig latrines. The only trouble is to get everyone to do it.

At first the Medical department tried persuasion. This failed, and so they dug latrines themselves. Then the doctors treated every man, woman and child, and left the parish satisfied that not a single hookworm had survived.

Three months later they came back, only to find the incidence as high as ever among the people. Mystified, they repeated the performance, with the same results. Tests and investigations of every kind at first failed to reveal how the hookworm had survived and spread. At last, in their thoroughness, they tested the dirt under the people's finger-nails, and found it full of the worm's eggs.

"It's going to be difficult," said Mr. Fletcher, "to clean the finger-nails of everyone in Africa."

Signs of cultivation vanished and the road started to twist and turn. Rain had fallen all night, and until eleven that morning. We advanced with caution, hugging the inside of hairpin bends which turned the road back on itself every few hundred yards. On our left rose a preci-

## THE SEMLIKI VALLEY

pice, whence boulders dislodged by torrents might fall to block our way. On our right the precipice fell away into deep forested gorges holding shreds of cloud.

So we advanced with caution, delighted to find that P.W.D. road gangs were already at work rolling aside tumbled boulders and filling in runnels scoured by flood water. By midday they had made passable a road that at midnight had been totally blocked by falls and wash-aways. The system of decentralised road maintenance in Uganda really works.

No one could readily forget the view we encountered as we rounded one of the bends. At our backs arose the hidden mountain, in front a dark gorge sliced into the earth so deeply that the tall trees far below looked as insignificant as creeping thyme. This gorge carried the eye down and away to receive the impact of a great wide shining sea of plain, speckled and flecked with bush and tree, that stretched away to an invisible horizon.

"The Semliki valley," said my companion, and there, sure enough, was a thread of silver on this dust-white sea, and, far to our right, under some low sloping hills, a shimmering patch that might have been water or the heat-haze rising from the plain. If it was water (we could not be sure) then it was the southern tip of Lake Albert.

Beyond the Semliki lies the Congo, and beyond Lake Albert, the Nile. A twig thrown into the Semliki could float past the temples of Karnak and the pyramids of Gizeh into the Mediterranean Sea. Here, at the source, all was silent and empty; in all that immensity, no sign of human life, only a kite overhead, its shadow flicking across the green hillside as fleeting as a thought in the mind. You seemed to look into time and space, and over the rim of the world.

The Semliki starts in Lake Edward and flows to the west of Ruwenzori, receiving from the snows many rivulets (Stanley counted 62) before entering the southern extremity of Lake Albert. From the north end of Lake Albert issues the White, or Albert, Nile. (It is a fact naturally confusing to the first explorers that the Victoria Nile should flow into Lake Albert and almost immediately emerge again as the Albert Nile.) So Herodotus was right, and that Ptolemy who declared 'the sources of the Nile were to be found in two lakes whose waters were fed by snow melting on the Mountains of the Moon, south of the equator.'

People still dispute the Mountains of the Moon's identity. Some hold that Kilimanjaro would have been more familiar than Ruwenzori to sea-going Greek and Phœnician traders; there is even a school of

## UGANDA

thought favouring an insignificant snowless range north-east of Lake Tanganyika, whose native name means moon-mountains, where the Kagera river rises, to flow into Lake Victoria and so ultimately to feed the Nile.

By and large, the claims of Ruwenzori seem to hold the field, for beyond question its melted snows carry life into Egypt through 3,000 miles of desert and swamp.

With the sunlit Semliki valley below us and the cloud-enfolded crags of Ruwenzori behind, we dropped tortuously towards our goal. Soon we began to skirt the fringe of the forest, the real rain-forest of the tropics: dark, tangled, moist, warm, the branches hung with thick lianas and encrusted with tree-ferns, orchids, lichens and fungi. Here dwell forest hog and giant genet, leopard and chimpanzee; and in the deep canopy overhead birds of extravagant plumage betray themselves only by a flapping of wings or an abrupt, discordant squawk. Here, if one could but see it, is to be found the Ruwenzori turaco, whose feathers are coloured emerald green, deep grass green, ultramarine, mother-of-pearl, crimson, royal purple and flamingo rose.

We lunched in a natural clearing beside a mountain stream. Butterflies settled at our feet on moss and leaf, and danced through shafts of sunlight, motes of colour—saffron-yellow, blood-red, peacock-blue.

Once, on shipboard, I met a lady who seemed to be a lepidopterous St. Francis, and watched, in a forest in the Indies, butterflies of all shapes and sizes perch trustingly on her arms and shoulders. I told this story to my companion. Giving me a peculiar look, he said:

"I hardly like to mention it, but you know what attracts butterflies?"

It was true; often you see fresh dung or a piece of rotting carcass half-smothered with the vivid, velvety wings of these most lovely insects, while the delicate proboscis sucks nourishment from decay. I hoped my shipboard acquaintance, a lady of rank and fashion, had not observed this peculiarity of her dainty friends.

I had been warned what to expect of the pygmies.

"They have become very commercialised. They'll crowd round the car demanding 'centis'. And with the money they'll buy bhang, their great weakness."

The pygmies have no permanent dwellings, only shelters in the forest's recesses. They do not cultivate. What they need they buy from their neighbours, the Baamba, or—more likely—steal.

"I was out the other day in the forest looking for birds," a D.O. in Fort Portal had told me. "I heard something on the opposite ridge

## THE GHOUL AND THE PYGMY

and turned to ask a pygmy tracker just behind me whether it was a forest hog. He'd vanished. Ten minutes later, I heard the pygmy call that signifies a kill. It took me forty-five minutes hard going to reach the place, and there he was roasting a bit of hog on a little fire. . . .

"The pygmies' movements through forest are uncanny. Sometimes they'll swing from tree to tree. And their hearing is of a different order from ours. They can tell you there's game about when no one else can hear a thing. Once, when everyone was talking, a pygmy alerted the camp by saying there was a big tusker nearby. No one else had even heard a sound. His ears had detected not merely a beast, but an elephant, and not merely an elephant, but a big 'un. He was right."

Our road was running now through dense, tall, splendid forest, with here and there a clearing made by the Baamba for their huts and shambas. We came suddenly upon a little group of shouting figures by the roadside. Here were the pygmies: ugly, wizened and curiously pathetic, not perhaps in their own right, but because they brought to mind pictures of war-ravaged children with stunted bodies and the look of old, sick men. Wrinkled, bearded, bleary-eyed faces stared up from ungainly yet agile bodies the height of a fourteen-year-old-child. Prehensile hands were stretched for cents. under our noses. Some carried bows and arrows and wore little wooden charms.

The morning's rain had delayed us, and it was now too late to visit their encampment. So we drove on, and Mr. Fletcher told me of a pygmy tragedy, or near-tragedy, for it ended well.

A man of the Baamba tribe lost his father, as he thought through sorcery, and had reason to believe that the grave would be disturbed by the witch. So for 5/- and a goat (a very handsome fee) he hired a pygmy guard, and warned him that a naked woman would come to rob the grave.

Sure enough, on the third night a naked woman came out of the darkness and began to scabble up the grave. An arrow from the pygmy's bow transfixed her. An angry husband carried the news to the chief, and the law's machinery started to grind. The pygmy was tried and condemned for murder, but the death sentence was reduced to one of five years in jail.

The local officials believed that to fasten in prison a man who had known nothing but the freedom of the forest would be vastly more cruel than to cage a lion. Besides, the pygmy had only carried out orders. Did the law protect ghouls? These and other reasons for mercy were advanced and advanced again by the D.C. and the Commissioner of the Province, but all in vain; the law remained adamant. So the

## UGANDA

bemused pygmy, ignorant of his crime, was locked up, and moped like a sick and captive animal. He would surely have died, had the warders not treated him more as a mascot or pet than as a convict. After five long years he returned to his forests as mystified as when he left, but loaded with gifts sufficient to keep him for the rest of his life in bhang.

We came now to the Baamba market, crowded with chattering, jostling, laughing, bargaining folk. The skin-clad men are short and dumpy with prognathous faces; the admixture of pygmy blood is plain. The women, even young women, who go naked, have the most pendulous bosoms I have ever seen. The flat breasts of the more elderly hang down to their waists like empty sausage-cases, but their owners grin and giggle, proud of the brass bangles in which arms and legs are cased.

At Bundibugyo, you might have slipped back 20 years. This is Africa as it used to be, its people remote, uncivilised, riddled, no doubt, with horrible diseases and cruel superstitions, cooped up in their narrow world, ignorant of spiritual values: nevertheless, for reasons which remain obscure, infinitely more given to laughter and the joy of life than the generation that is superseding them—a generation of young men better dressed, better informed and with far wider opportunities, but so often half-crushed, it would seem, under the weight of their knowledge of double-entry and vitamins and electoral representation. The fruit of the tree of knowledge has not lost its bitter tang; and those who reach out for the gifts of Western materialism are heirs to its malaise as well as to its triumphs.

The nucleus of Bundibugyo market is the spring-balance of a venturesome Indian trader who brings his lorry up this precipitous road to buy produce. The Baamba are considerable growers of cash crops, notably cotton and coffee. This Indian buys cotton at a Government rate and sells again to the ginneries at another rate, taking a fixed and fair profit.

In such a moist, warm climate, and at an altitude of between 2,000 and 3,000 feet, the forest soil's fertility is prodigious. These Baamba have only to plant seeds and almost anything grows abundantly—rice, cotton, tobacco, maize, coffee, bananas, millets, citrus fruit. Failures and famines are virtually unknown; the enemies are thunderstorms, birds and monkeys. This unusual corner of Uganda—a finger, as it were, of the great Ituri forests of the Congo—is the only place in East Africa where the oil-palm is found, and the only place where a form of yellow fever is suspected to exist.

Our concern now was to dodge the thunderstorms. We started back

## NUBIAN GIN

along the twisting forest road, climbing again over the spur of Ruwenzori and leaving the far sunlit Semliki plain below. Soon the plain was sunlit no longer, but obscured by clouds of indigo. Behind us, lightning flashed out like a sword in the heart of the storm, the roll of thunder struck the mountainside and was hurled down into the valleys. Climbing higher, we looked back on deep violet-stained cloudbanks into a well of rain, and hoped for exemption. We were fortunate. Back we climbed to the eastern flanks of the massif, to find ourselves in a damp white curling mist, as thick as ectoplasm. Out of it loomed the shapes of trees and, once or twice, the iron-grey, motionless surface of a crater-lake fringed with reeds.

Two figures loomed up, waving wildly.

"Help us, help us!" they cried, like lost souls; one pictured a companion drowning in the cold waters of the lake where no birds sang, or the haunted vision of a wraith with tresses, Excalibur in hand. But they only wanted a lift home. They staggered into the car, and kept up an excited and incoherent conversation until they cried at us to stop, and vanished into the mists.

"*Warrigi*," said the D.C. coldly, using the local word for Nubian gin, "unless it was bhang."

## HOIMA

The name of the tyrant Kabarega is still remembered in the kingdom of Bunyoro, and his son, the present Mukama, sits on the throne. Tito Gafabusa Winyi II, C.B.E., has reigned for 21 years.

There is a real throne: a wide-seated, high-backed chair draped in leopard skins and raised on a dais. Here the Mukama sits every morning: a small, neat, sad-faced man, immersed in ceremonial robes and the fur of colobus monkeys, while the rolling of a drum summons his retainers to pay daily homage. Across the doorway lies an ivory tusk which none may cross on pain of death without his invitation; by his side stands the insignia of his office, a tall drum and a long spear; on a wall hang the silent horn of war, sounded so often in Kabarega's day, and the less respected horn of peace. Other sacred, magical and, to the alien, obscure objects decorate the room.

Every morning, his homage taken, the Mukama leads a ceremonial parade. He lives himself in a P.W.D. bungalow, and around it are grouped a number of large, well-made round huts protected by screens of neatly plaited reeds. Heavy grass thatch sweeps almost to the ground, forming wide eaves. Now the huts, swept and garnished, wear an empty and deserted air.

## UGANDA

"The first house is for the king's brothers," said the Mukama in his excellent English as we walked through. In olden times few can have lived here, for, by Bahima custom, when a new king succeeded all his brothers, save two selected as tame companions, were burnt to death.

"Here is the house of the king's sisters. They must remain virgins; in this noose"—he touched a rope looped over one of the rafters—"should any disobey, we hanged the lover."

Other huts followed: one for the king's maternal uncles (in this lives the king's spear, resting on a pad, for it must never be earthed); another for the nobles; then a big courtyard where, against a tall screen of reeds, the king stands to take the salute at the ceremony known as the *mpango*.

This event, an offering of tribute and loyalty from all the king's men, took place at every new moon. In a modern world this has proved too greedy of time and of the people's small resources, and now the *mpango* is a biennial affair. The Mukama stands up in robes of bark-cloth, on his head an elaborate crown of basketwork decorated with cowrie shells, on his chin a long false beard of colobus monkey skin. The nobles prostrate themselves on the ground before him, covering their faces, while others hold a canopy over his head.

"I can trace back my ancestry," said the Mukama, "for six hundred years. Four hundred years ago my forefathers came down from the north to conquer all this country."

Modern Bunyoro is but the relic of an empire which included regions now parcelled out between Tanganyika, the Belgian Congo and other kingdoms of Uganda. Because Kabarega fought the European intruder instead of treating with him as the Baganda did—so his descendants say—Bunyoro was sadly dismembered, parts of it going to the crafty Baganda and parts to Kabarega's rebel half-brother who had broken away and set up on his own in Toro.<sup>1</sup> The kingdom of Buganda, which now overshadows the rest, was, by tradition, a mere offshoot of Bunyoro, having been founded by a hunter who had wandered far afield with a dog, a woman and a spear (to this day the insignia of Buganda) and settled in a new country, leaving the imprint of his foot and spear-haft, and of the behinds of the woman and the dog, on a stone.

To-day's Mukama, of polished manners and a quiet, self-possessed

<sup>1</sup>Kabarega, who for many years waged an intermittent war against the British, was eventually captured in 1899 with Mwanga, the wicked king of Baganda. Both were transported to the Seychelles. Kabarega, as a very old man, was allowed to return to Uganda in 1923, but died at Jinja, and is buried three miles from Hoima.

## IMMIGRANTS WELCOMED

address, seems a rather saddened person. Here, as in Ankole, the tsetse is spreading and the cattle dying off.

"In the last few years we have lost twenty thousand head," he said; and as a Muhima, with cattle in his heart, a little bit of his spirit had perhaps died with them.

As a consequence, no doubt, of this disaster, the people's diet is declining, and with it their health. They are short of proteins. Yet they will not touch the teeming fish of Lake Albert. Even Florence, a teacher at the C.M.S. girls' school we visited later in the day, admitted that she would not eat it, nor is it ever served to the children at the school, and meat and milk are rarities.

The human population, most exceptionally, seems to be declining in numbers as well as in vigour. Bunyoro, said its ruler, has a mere 23,000 taxpayers, less than half the number boasted by the upstart Toro next-door. There is nothing wrong with the land. Tall elephant-grass and well-grown trees speak of fertility, in the shambas you see excellent crops of cotton, tobacco, coffee, the inevitable bananas and the usual grains. Doctors say that venereal disease is mainly to blame.

"We need more people," said the Mukama. Startled at such an unusual remark, the reverse of all one generally hears, I suggested that there should be no difficulty: in Kenya, for instance, tens of thousands of Wakamba and Kikuyu families were short of land.

"I should welcome Wakamba and Kikuyu," the Mukama said. "They were our people once."

The historical basis of this claim is dubious, but the statement interesting. On the one hand landless people, given to wandering and settling in distant places; on the other, empty, fertile, well-watered land. Should distance and political boundaries, one asks, keep the two apart?

Uganda has more recorded history than any other part of the East African interior. Europe's first contact with Bunyoro came over 80 years ago, when Speke passed through in 1862 on his return from the discovery of the Victoria Nile, and Samuel Baker and his wife followed two years later on their hard road to Lake Albert.

These two friends disagreed on their estimates of the Bunyoro people. Speke, coming from the disciplined court of Buganda, found 'a wild set of ragamuffins—as different as possible from the smart, well-dressed, quick-of-speech Waganda'; Baker, emerging from the savage north, was more appreciative: 'After the disgusting naked tribes that



## UGANDA

we had been travelling amongst for more than twelve months, it was a delightful change to find ourselves in comparative civilisation; this was evinced not only in the decency of clothing, but also in the manufactures of the country.'

Both explorers agreed, however, in their estimate of the king (the present ruler's grandfather) who seems to have been one of the most unattractive monarchs ever to sit upon a throne. For greed, suspicion and prevarication, Kamrasi would have been hard to beat. Speke and Baker both found themselves virtually imprisoned until the covetous monarch had stripped them, by a combination of blackmail and cajolery, of almost every possession. Speke wrote angrily of the loss of his guns, his books, his medicines, his mosquito curtains, his precious and only chronometer, Baker despairingly of the surrender of even 'the pretty yellow muslin Turkish handkerchief fringed with silver drops that Mrs. Baker wore upon her head', and drew the line only when Kamrasi went on to demand Mrs. Baker herself, a suggestion which provoked him to draw his revolver and resolve that 'if this were to be the end of the expedition, it should also be the end of Kamrasi', while the lady herself 'made him a little speech in Arabic, not one word of which he understood, with a countenance almost as amiable as the head of Medusa'.

Kamrasi, taken aback, explained that he had only meant to arrange a friendly exchange of consorts, and at last gave permission for the victims of his rapacity, now squeezed dry, to depart. 'I assisted my wife upon her ox,' writes Baker, 'and with a very cold adieu to Kamrasi, I turned my back most gladly on Mruli.'

The king's sisters did nothing all day but drink milk, and (Speke writes) should they have occasion to leave the hut, could do so only on a litter—they were too fat to walk—needing eight men to support it. The only redeeming feature of Kamrasi's character recorded by either of these explorers was that, by local standards, he was mild in his judgments, sentencing those guilty of small offences (such as an accidental exposure of part of the leg) to a severe flogging instead of to the immediate execution which would have been their lot at the Buganda court.

The spirit of these troubled and bloody days, when each native kingdom was constantly at war with its neighbour and the hand of the Egyptian and Arab slave-raider was reaching down towards them, is hard to recapture as one looks across the peaceful, smiling, sunlit country from the green lawns of Hoima, and admires the flowering shrubs and roses in the garden.

## AN ENGLISHMAN'S PLANTATION

"It's fatal to plant roses," said the D.C. "If you do, you're certain to be transferred."<sup>1</sup>

### MASINDI

Close to Hoima is a rare thing in Uganda: a plantation belonging to an Englishman. Years ago, a few scattered freehold grants were made to Europeans. This policy was soon abandoned, but an odd plantation here and there survives, indeed flourishes, despite the handicap of a long road haul to Kampala, where the railway ends.

We found a young, single-handed manager, an ex-stock inspector from Rhodesia, wrestling with spinning-wheels and looms, objects of which he knew nothing at all until one or two specimens arrived on his doorstep a few months ago.

"We learn as we go along," he said cheerfully. There on the looms were heavy striped cottons for curtains, herring-bone woollen tweeds and even a heather mixture whose yarn he had spun himself, using as a guide to colour harmonies an English tailor's pattern. Elsewhere young women were spinning flax to make into bags for the nearby tin mines.

The labour arrangements would perhaps distress an English mill-owner. The manager allocates three men to each hand-loom in the hopes that one of them will turn up. Occasionally two come on the same day, and sit side by side like duettists, one inserting the shuttle and the other taking it out.

Their output is phenomenally low. On the plantations—coffee, rubber, tobacco—work starts soon after six and ceases before eleven, and no offer of double pay and bonuses will persuade the men into an hour of overtime. They need little money beyond their tax of 23/- a year, and a few hours' work a day wins them rations. These, issued free, are now bought by the estate, which had to give up growing food-crops because everything was stolen from the fields. Continual petty pilfering from the plantations themselves is one of the hazards, especially now that tobacco-growing is being pushed by the Government in the hope of providing the Bunyoro people with a cash-crop. Many local families already regard Mr. Stafford's tobacco in that light.

Beyond these islands of productivity in a sea of bush the vegetation thickens and the country appears almost empty save (one is told, but they are invisible) for game, birds and insects, including the tsetse. Imperceptibly, our road climbed slowly to the lip of an escarpment above the great basin in which Lake Albert lies. Without warning, we

<sup>1</sup>He was quite right. A few months after my visit he was moved on.

## UGANDA

rounded a corner to face the view. There lay that long, still, blue sheet of water, stretching out of sight, and on its far side the Congo's purple mountains reared their crests into the sky.

This was the same view that had first enraptured and rewarded Samuel Baker some 80 years ago at the triumphant end of his painful struggle towards the lake.

"The glory of our prize," he wrote, "burst suddenly upon me! There, like a sea of quicksilver, lay far beneath the grand expanse of water—a boundless sea horizon on the south and south-west glittering in the noonday sun; and on the west, at fifty or sixty miles distance, blue mountains rose from the bosom of the lake to a height of about 7,000 feet.

"It is impossible to describe the triumph of that moment;—here was the reward for all our labour—for the years of tenacity with which we had toiled through Africa. England had won the sources of the Nile! Long before I reached this spot, I had arranged to give three cheers with all our men in English style in honour of the discovery, but now that I looked down upon the great inland sea nestled in the very heart of Africa, and thought how vainly mankind had sought these sources throughout so many ages, and reflected that I had been the humble instrument permitted to unravel this portion of the great mystery where so many greater than I had failed, I felt too serious to vent my feelings in vain cheers for victory, and I sincerely thanked God for having guided and supported us through all the dangers to the good end.

"I was about 1,500 feet above the lake, and I looked down from the steep granite cliff upon those welcome waters—upon that vast reservoir that nourished Egypt and brought fertility where all was wilderness—upon that great source so long hidden from mankind; that source of bounty and of blessings to millions of human beings; and as one of the greatest objects in nature, I determined to honour it with a great name. As an imperishable memorial to one loved and mourned by our gracious Queen and deplored by every Englishman, I called this great lake the 'Albert Nyanza'. The Victoria and the Albert lakes are the two sources of the Nile." (*The Albert Nyanza*, by Samuel Baker, 1866.)

The scene has changed little since Baker's time but for a white cluster of roofs below us which is Butiaba, a station on the Kenya and Uganda Railways' route to the Sudan. Here passengers change from a bus into a small vessel—probably the *Samuel Baker* itself—which takes them to the mouth of the Albert Nile, and then embark on a flat-bottomed boat which carries them down towards Khartoum and Egypt.

## A TIMBER FAMINE

We lunched in a bungalow set in a fine terraced garden full of flowering shrubs and shaded by a magnificent *Albizia* tree covered with small pale flowers, while a forester explained that of Uganda's once heavily-wooded area, only 2.3 per cent remains under 'closed forest', which means the real thing, as opposed to 'orchard bush' or savannah, where such trees as have survived fire and axe stand like sentinels amid grass and scrub. Every year these survivors are diminished as more land is cleared, and nothing can be done to save them, whereas the closed forests, such as they are, have won official protection.

The Budongo forest, less than 170 square miles in extent, is an outlier of the great Ituri across the lake and yields several species of African mahogany. These are magnificent giants, towering with clean boles and dark foliage above the underbush and the human onlooker. From their branches sprout clusters of epiphytes, tree-ferns spring up from the forks, and out of the trunks of lesser trees protrude spongy masses of elephant's ear fungi.

So new is the study and control of African forests that no one knows how long mahoganies live or at what age they reach maturity. The forester's guess is that seedlings now being planted will be ready for cutting in about 80 years. They are planning the management of their estate on a 150 years' rotation, and expect no results from their experimental plots before the next generation.

"Uganda, and East Africa generally, faces an acute timber famine within the next few years," said these experts. In the past, forests have been shamefully neglected, a steady tree-depopulation has been going on.

Timber is the only fuel for 13,000,000 people, the main constituent of their dwellings and the source of all their furniture. Now millable timber is running out, and especially mvule, or Uganda teak, which grows at certain altitudes in Uganda not in forests but in the open 'orchard bush'. In a few years, it is reckoned, no mvule will be left. Governments are starting to lay down small plantations in Kenya and Tanganyika as well as in Uganda, but these will not reach maturity for at least 60 years.

The mahoganies of Budongo are now being felled to a plan which will spin out supplies until new plantings catch up and overtake destruction, in about 60 years' time—that is, if all goes well with the pruned seedlings, planted out every year in lines and carefully tended, which are beginning to push up their crowns above the dense undergrowth. Such planting is not on a large scale. The department spends yearly on this, Uganda's largest commercial forest, only some £1,300.

## UGANDA

It is a curious experience to find yourself, within a few miles of the Budongo forest, driving past little gardens where sturdy-looking European peasant women are getting in the washing, and through groups of flaxen-haired, pale-skinned children strolling home from school. The cottages are mud-built in native style, and it was strange to see white faces instead of black ones peering out of the doorways. This must be the largest European city in East Africa next to Nairobi, yet it has no name, and in a few years nothing but the shell will remain.

In it live more than 3,000 homeless Poles, of whom over 1,000 are children still in school. The only Englishman here is the camp commandant.

They have, I suppose, been fortunate, as fortune must be judged by Eastern Europeans. In order to avoid the least disturbance to Africans, the camp was sited in an uninhabited and tsetse-infested stretch of country where malaria and amœbic dysentery are common, and the little hospital was full with malarial children; yet this hospital's record is 100 births to 30 deaths, and in spite of a lack of milk and vegetables, no Pole has suffered from malnutrition, exposure or starvation. For four years these refugees have enjoyed free clothes and free rations. Many of them—teachers, nurses, camp officials—have been well paid, and the rest have drawn ten shillings a week from that apparently inexhaustible reservoir, the British taxpayer's pocket.

These are the Poles who trekked on foot from Russia down through the Caucasus to the south margin of the Black Sea, and on through Kurdistan and Persia to encampments improvised for them by the British Army in Iraq. These are the Poles whose men fought for four years with General Anders and with the Eighth Army, and who survived to sail from Basra to Mombasa and Dar es Salaam. In the whole camp, which at its zenith numbered over 4,000, there is no man who is not ancient or unfit. It is a camp of wives without husbands and children without fathers, of families without a home, a country or a future.

British officials have commented on the lack of self-help amongst them, on the taking for granted of dependence on others, on the reluctance of young Poles to go out into the world. It would seem almost as if the cutting of all their peasant roots had robbed them of the sap of independence.

It has been stated many times, and with high authority, that the Poles must go. But where to? Their homes, now theirs no longer, are in Russia, and to Russia they refuse to go. Homeless, stateless, aimless people, yet good human material surely, you think when you see

## THE MURCHISON FALLS

the tall healthy-looking lads, the strong flaxen-haired girls—fair detritus of a Europe in decay.

We drove into Masindi along the Caledonian Road, so called because of the Scots planters who set up coffee shambas here 30 or 40 years ago. A few survive, hard-working and tenacious—the Margot family have a row of handsome villas along the road—but Indians have bought up most of this small enclave of plantations.

Masindi itself, now a provincial headquarters and a night-stop (with an excellent hotel) on the Nairobi-to-Cairo route, was founded 60 years ago by Gordon when he was Governor-General of the Sudan. All this region then fell, in theory, under the nebulous suzerainty of the Egyptian Khedive.

## GULU

Sixty miles north of Masindi, a ferry crosses the Victoria Nile: here a wide, sluggish, shallow stream, fringed with papyrus, and but newly issued from Lake Kyoga's marshy waters. To the west, the river winds through the extremity of Bunyoro to compress itself, by an astonishing contortion, into a rocky channel no more than 30 feet wide. Here, under a plume of spray, its waters churn and struggle, only to leap downwards into the calm oblivion of the pool below. This pool, cupped by wooded cliffs and forested to the very lip of the water, is inhabited by shoals of hippopotami. It is a strange contrast between the racing, milk-white torrent as it roars through narrow cliffs and the still, black, forest-cradled pool.

These are the Murchison Falls. Here I have walked to within a few feet of a 'tame' crocodile (even the mildest does not inspire confidence) which lived on a spit of sand under the falls, and was fed with fish by the captain of the Nile steamer. Air travellers have watched pink-nosed hippos plopping into the water like so many fat astonished pigs, for it used to be an old Imperial Airways custom to zoom so low over the falls as to seem almost to brush the snoozing creatures into the water with the aircraft's wings.

North of the Nile, the road runs straight and flat towards the Sudan. On the left lies a game reserve, infected with sleeping sickness. This bank of the Nile is totally uninhabited, having been cleared and 'closed' because of the disease.

Fresh elephant-droppings lay on the road, together with track after track made by ants: little open tunnels in the red earth. Beside the road, hoopoes with their tall crests and brilliant bands of colour lurched now and again from tree to tree. Once or twice we met a party of young

## UGANDA

men wearing their hair in ringlets and carrying spears, coming or going from the primitive regions of the West Nile, but nowhere did we see signs of human habitation.

Gulu is a single row of dukas, an imposing prison, an Anglican and an R.C. Mission and Government offices on the brow of a gentle rise. It is the headquarters of the Northern Province, whose borders march with those of the Belgian Congo, Kenya and the Sudan, embracing well over one-third of the Protectorate's total area and holding within its borders three-quarters of a million scattered and partially nomadic people, many of them at that stage of 'backwardness' when they wear no clothes, or at most a bunch of leaves fore and aft which, in silhouette, appears to endow them with short cock-like tails.

Over this huge, spare province, a man with the appropriate name of Steil presides.

The Acholi of these parts are cousins of the tall, naked tribesmen of the southern Sudan, and came down from the north in comparatively recent times to settle on this fertile tableland. Their language is as different from that of the Bantu group as English from Russian, their great god Jok (a sort of Jehovah) has no counterpart in the Bantu spirit world. They recognise no hereditary chiefs and bow the knee to no overlords, but pay deep respect to clan heads and to rain-makers. They are hunters and warriors, independent and free. (One-fifth of all Uganda's soldiers in the war came from this tribe, in size one-twentieth of the population; and these were fighting men, not clerks and orderlies.)

A man who had spent all his working life among Nilotic tribes told me:

"We Europeans can never really get to the bottom of the Bantu mind. It twists and turns into all sorts of queer channels where we can't follow. But these Nilotic peoples—they think as we do. Our minds work in the same way."

People will say that duplicity and cunning and the oriental matching of wits so dearly loved by many Bantu folk are qualities despised by Nilotics. The courage and manliness of the warrior is closer to their ideal. Europeans who have lived among them often feel for Nilotic tribes a passionate attachment something akin to 'Masai-itis', and champion their cause against the Bantu, who are in general more 'advanced', astute and politically-minded. It is perhaps typical of these two types that the average Acholi who leaves his home joins the police force, while the Baganda becomes a trader or a clerk.

British and Acholi share a passion for the chase. In the past, hunts

## THE BOREDOM OF THE BUSH

were community affairs which lasted for days. With fire and spear the beaters drove game animals of every shape and size into a big semi-circle of nets held by their companions, who fell upon them with crude weapons. The country is full of game-pits, so well concealed that once, on safari, the Steils mounted what they took to be an old ant-hill and without warning Mrs. Steil vanished out of sight, clasping an umbrella; to be hauled later out of a pit 20 feet deep, but fortunately without the sharp pointed stakes generally so fixed as to impale the victims.

Community hunts have vanished with the march of progress; so have tribal wars, cattle-raids, witch-hunts and even dances. An unforeseen result of civilised rule has been that life for the ordinary 'bush' African has grown duller and duller.

Our own case, it may be suggested, is not much better. Still, we have managed to salvage from the decline of festival and pageantry our great public occasions: our coronations and royal weddings, our anniversaries and processions, as well as our cup finals and race-meetings, the celebrations of our faith and the personal appearances of film stars—and perhaps as many young ladies are carried off in a swoon from Leicester Square as ever succumb to the transports of tribal orgies.

The African has none of these. The orgy withers, the dance dies, and no Rita Hayworth or Robert Taylor arises to replace them.

Nor would the African think much of them if they did. Africans are not—if one may venture to generalise—romantic, and the concept of 'romantic love' as a rule lies outside their experience. Marriage means everything; they take it as a rule more seriously than we do; but they prefer to reach it through solid family-to-family bargaining rather than by the Romeo and Juliet approach. It is less a contract between individuals than between families and clans, involving a man's ancestors and his unborn sons more closely than his personal fads and fancies. For this reason the plots and fantasies of the lover cannot provide the young man with that sense of adventure and excitement, that relief from daily life's monotony, which he found once through other means, and has since forfeited.

The need remains. Thrusting waters, no longer guided into sanctioned furrows, will scour for themselves new channels: the religious sect, the secret society, the subversive creed. Perhaps the African has found conspiracy to be a sort of wild fellowship—as sweet as love, and here a substitute for it.

It could thus be argued that the politics of mimic revolution that are coming out like a rash all over modern Africa spring partly—though of course by no means wholly—from the need to indulge



## UGANDA

those emotions which tribal custom once canalised, but which now run to waste in the hearts of the young men.

All this may seem a roundabout way of introducing a football club. Yet the idea behind the Gulu Football League is to bring back a little interest and drama, with the spice of contest and the sense of fellowship, into the lives of the young men—in short, to turn warriors into half-backs. The project may sound jejune, but one must work with the tools to one's hand, and in fact it has proved unexpectedly successful.

Mr. Steil, the founder, started as well an annual Olympic Games festival, with the award of a prize to the *victor ludorum*. League matches are played in places little more substantial than names on a map, but the finals at Gulu attract crowds of several thousand. No trains and buses convey spectators; they must walk, and walk they do, a day's journey and more. This energetic Commissioner with his idea, as it proved a sound one, has all Acholi-land enthused over the new pastime, and from its origin as a football league has blossomed the Acholi Association, now branching out in other directions.

When the afternoon thunderstorm was over he took us to the club-room to glimpse the social side. This centre is a pleasant, unpretentious brick-and-thatch building put up out of the Association's shilling-a-year subscription and the profits of a beer-club. Here the literate Acholi, drawn from schools and Government offices, meet after hours to hold debates, act plays, read in an embryo library stocked by the British Council, or strum on the various queer-shaped string instruments of their tribe.

A small group of young men—the intellectual flower of the Acholi—soon assembled in the club-house: tall, blacker in skin than the Bantu, and with sharper features. One could not but be charmed by their quiet, friendly, diffident manners. One, a C.M.S. school-teacher, spends his spare time composing a novel in English; another has written in his own tongue a history of the clans into which the tribe is divided, and has dedicated the profits to the Association. Yet a third has written a play celebrating the life of a famous warrior-hero Awic, whose recent funeral dances lasted for five strenuous days. (So old was Awic that he could remember Samuel Baker.)

Film-makers often say that Africans are born actors, and they can tell a tale better than most men. A sense of the dramatic is in their bones. Why, then, have they developed no drama of their own? I do not know the answer; but here, surely, is a great opportunity for the newly literate man to fuse tribal tradition with his new-found Western

## ANTONIO AND WORLD BOOKS

skill, and thus to create a new school of African drama. It seems almost tragic that the emerging leaders of a people so barren in art should, with the wide world before them, drive all their energies through one narrow political defile.

In the debating club, politics are barred. At the last meeting the topic 'Where does the rainbow come from?' was discussed.

This lively and flourishing Acholi Association is independent of Government control and run by two committees, one for sports and one for welfare, manned entirely by Acholi except for the chairman, still the D.C. It has produced the first printed literature in the language, a well-got-up magazine whose contributors show a strong bias in favour of tribal history. None of this would be remarkable in, say, Buganda, but among these isolated warrior-hunters the barest bones of literacy are new, and it is to their credit that a little flesh has so soon been added.

I asked Antonio, the Native Authority treasurer and a writer also, how he kept his mind alert in a place so remote as Gulu. He answered:

"I subscribe to the *East African Standard* and to *World Books*." (This firm sends out monthly reprints; recent issues have included Sitwell's *Left Hand, Right Hand*, Rosamond Lehmann's *The Ballad and the Source* and Michael Sadleir's *Fanny by Gaslight*.) It seems a long way, in mind and spirit, from Renishaw to Gulu.

A crowd of naked, round-eyed children appeared from nowhere to cluster round us. In the bare yard before her hut a friendly young woman left her task of pounding millet in a hollow log to dance round us, one hand uplifted, her breasts bouncing up and down as she pranced and chanted songs of welcome. She was naked save for a small bunch of leaves dangling from a string round her waist.

The flock of children numbered 25. How many attended school? Six lifted their hands. Yet Gulu, with excellent mission schools, is less than five miles away. Were they all offspring of one father? No, of three brothers who shared this group of huts under the wing of their grandfather. The friendly woman was joined by several others, naked as she; round and round they hopped, singing their high-spirited song, while the children gazed in silence. I thought of Antonio, the tall, dignified, well-clad treasurer, settling down of an evening to his *World Book*. Could there be a greater contrast? So it may have been, perhaps, when the Romanised Briton with his fine clothes and high manners occupied his solid villa with its heated baths and its mosaics, among the rude, skin-clad British tribes in their mud-and-wattle villages.

## UGANDA

Near the friendly woman's hut was a jago headquarters, and here we stopped to call on the chief. The structure of administration is much the same here as in the rest of the country, but all the names are different: the gombolola becomes the jago. On to the central council for the whole tribe, the Acholi have insisted on putting two women; allegedly one of the most backward peoples, they are the first to take this feminist plunge.

"Will you ever get them to talk?" asked the D.C., thinking of the bashful way of African women.

The Acholi roared with laughter.

"Shall we ever get them to stop?"

Like most folk given to nakedness, the Acholi were once a highly moral people. In the old days adultery was a rare and heinous crime punished by a beating, sometimes so severe as to cripple or kill. With the coming of British rule, the penalty was reduced to a fine of one bull and one cow, commuted in practice to 70/- in cash. This has not proved a deterrent.

"Most of the cases brought to my court are cases of adultery," said the chief sadly. His court-book showed that of eleven disputes heard the day before, nine were actions for adultery.

This is leading to the spread of tsetse fly. In the old days people lived more in settlements, and so the land was either densely wooded or thoroughly cleared. Neither state was favourable to the *morsitans* species of tsetse-fly. Now people are much more scattered, partly because men choose to live as far as possible from their neighbours so as to preserve the virtue of their wives. This runs counter to Government policy, which is to bunch the people up together, partly to cope the better with the fly and partly to encourage the use of schools, dispensaries and welfare centres. There is actually an N.A. rule forbidding anyone to live more than four miles from a road.

Another reason for dispersal is the passion for hunting which still grips Acholi men, and which they must nowadays travel far afield to indulge; and there is also the anxiety to get out of range of chiefs and councils, with all their irksome controls—and even, if possible, to escape taxation. The net result seems to be a drift away from, instead of towards, the centres and towns.

The tsetse position is serious indeed. Everywhere the fly is gaining ground. These fertile and well-watered tablelands—surprisingly, the rainfall is about 60 inches—carry splendid pastures, but in the last ten years the cattle population has declined from about 200,000 to a mere remnant of 40,000 head. Just north of Gulu, the newly-formed anti-

## 'THE PARADISE OF AFRICA'

tsetse department has cleared a wide belt of bush to check the southward advance of the fly, and is engaged on game-slaughter, but no one seems very optimistic about its success. The death of their cattle is the main concern of the Acholi, even more distressing to them than the adultery of their women and far more important than a democratic constitution.

"At the moment, we may as well admit," said a regretful official, "we haven't a clue."

We clambered up the smooth grey boulders and, emerging on to a broad slab of granite, were nobly rewarded. Away rolled the country in all directions, a great grassy tableland set with solitary borassus palms and clumped acacias, broken here and there by rocky knolls or long ranges like the backs of crouching animals. It was a fine, bright, sparkling morning, the sun was benevolent and the air, at 4,000 feet, invigorating. Doves in their hundreds cooed and flapped in the tall trees, a flash of movement among the rocks betrayed a darting hyrax. No wonder Samuel Baker, marching down from the arid north, called Fatiko and its surroundings 'the paradise of Africa'.

If nature had made it a paradise man, at that time, had made of it a hell. It was then, in the 'sixties of the last century, the hunting-ground of Arab and Egyptian slavers based on Khartoum. On his first expedition, Baker crossed the paths of these 'Turks', as they were collectively called, and was so shocked by what he saw that he resolved to go back a second time to drive out and suppress them.

He returned to the Upper Nile with the Khedive Ismail's commission at the head of an army of 1,650 men and a fleet of ships, including three steel vessels built in England, in which he hacked and towed and poled a slow laborious passage up the papyrus-choked Nile. At Gondokoro he ran up the Egyptian flag and annexed the region in the name of the Khedive.

This task was the more difficult in that the biggest slave-traders of all were the Khedive's own officials, the Egyptian governors of stations up the Nile. Those who were not governors were agents of large firms in Khartoum or Cairo who owned ivory-trading concessions in the hinterland. A stream of slaves—Baker estimated their number at 50,000 a year at least—flowed out of these regions down the highway of the Nile. As for Gondokoro, then the traders' southernmost base, he wrote: "Whenever I approached the encampments of the various traders, I heard the clanking of fetters."

With great difficulty marching south, he found the country de-

## UGANDA

populated and ravaged. Scarcely a settlement remained. Tribe was at war with tribe, egged on and corrupted by the traders. Those who were not caught were likely enough to starve, since raiding-parties nosed out the buried grain, and if it could not be found exacted the information by: "catching the villagers and roasting their posteriors by holding them down on the mouth of a large earthen water-jar filled with glowing embers."<sup>1</sup>

At Fatiko, Baker's paradise, the 'greatest slave-hunter of the White Nile' had his station. Baker marched in from the north with drums and bugles sounding, his picked force of soldiers in scarlet coats and white trousers, he and his wife on horseback, and 400 carriers and a herd of over 1,000 cattle bringing up the rear; and feeling, he writes, "an exhilaration of spirits at the fact that I was here in the new capacity of a deliverer, who would be welcomed with open arms by the down-trodden natives of the country." Armed with the Khedive's commission, he disbanded the forces of this notorious slaver; and after much intrigue and resistance the camp under the rocks of Fatiko, where over a thousand slaves at a time had often been impounded, disappeared from the earth.

On the way back from Fatiko we called on an elderly rain-maker, the possessor of one of those strong, wise faces wrinkled like oak-bark, and of the courteous address of a generation to whom good manners are the very sum of decency.

The spirits and sprites of the underworld are as familiar to this old man as faces of his countless grandchildren. Once (he will relate), while working in his shamba, he was carried off to the hills by devils. His captors offered him a meal of flies. Refusing indignantly, he demanded white ants. No, said the devils, no white ants—only flies. The rain-maker went on hunger-strike, and in time the discouraged devils, finding they could do nothing with him, brought him back safe and sound to his shamba.

In the recesses of his hut he keeps some heavy stones which, if placed on a man's shamba, will cause his death. A few months ago these stones were seen on an individual's shamba, and the word went round that he was cursed. Some young ex-soldiers, emboldened by their new-found scepticism, threw the magic stones away into the bush.

"Now let the rain-maker see who's master," they boasted. "We are educated men, and believe no longer in such foolish things."

Ordinary folk round about only laughed. The old man, they said,

<sup>1</sup>Ismailia, by Samuel Baker.

## QUEUES FOR WATER

had been a match for the empty-headed young ones. The ex-soldiers had thrown away the wrong stones.

In Gulu the two schools, one Roman and one Anglican, were closed for the Easter holidays; but the show-piece is always on view. This is the new Roman Catholic cathedral.

Standing on a gentle hill above the far-ranging plain, this grey, thickset edifice has the look of a monument built to last a thousand years, and it holds a thousand worshippers. The monk who displayed it (an Englishman, although his Order is French) assured us that on feast-days it is packed to overflowing.

The cathedral started in medieval tradition as a voluntary effort, to be built by Acholi youths trained as craftsmen by the Fathers. The project outlasted the impulse, but labour and materials are all local; the chancel floor is done in mosaic and the domed ceiling brightly painted; all goes to make an exploit that in Europe might be unremarkable, but here, where no building more permanent than a mud hut has risen in all history, must excite admiration. It is only 75 years since Samuel Baker rode into the slavers' camp under the rocks of Fatiko.

## LIRA

In the country of the Lango people queue for water, not for buses or food. At five o'clock in the morning the woman puts down her pot or gourd to mark her place and returns at nine or ten to fill it; even so, she may have to wait until afternoon. Filling goes on all round the clock. Yet the annual rainfall is between 50 and 60 inches—about twice the English average. Although there is plenty of water it is to be found not in rivers so much as in springs and swamps which go dry, leaving the people stranded. Often the women—of course all this falls on them—have to walk seven or eight miles to draw water.

To counter this, the Lango N.A. has sunk small bore-holes and installed hand pumps, and it is here that the queues take place. When the N.A. had spent about £26,000 (thanks to cotton, this is a prosperous district) the Government took over and the bore-holes now fall on the Development and Welfare Fund. It seems odd to call on the British taxpayer when the people themselves appear quite willing to pay for it. Over 50 bore-holes have been sunk in this district, and the work continues.

Another object behind these bore-holes is to open up new country, for the people are increasing rapidly. They are lucky enough to have plenty of unoccupied land to spread into.

The people are increasing, but their cattle are melting away. It is the

## UGANDA

tsetse story over again. As in Acholi country, the anti-tsetse department has cleared a bushless barrier in the path of advance, but the 'tryps' is over it already—'mechanical transmission', probably, by ordinary flies. Game extermination is also going on. Most practical people I have met are sceptical: you cannot, they say, exterminate *all* the game, and it has yet to be proved that in time the fly will not change its feeding habits. And in the meantime 'late burning' is destroying most of the young trees.

"One of our troubles is the Acholi," said the man in charge of these, their cousins the Lango. "Having lost all *their* cattle, they come down here and offer themselves as herdsmen to anyone who'll pay their year's tax of twenty-two shillings. They get no food or pay but live off the herd. As a result they starve some of the calves and steal the rest. Between the fly and the Acholi our herds are melting away."

The Lango seem to take a defeatist view.

"They know it's going on, of course; but they say: What can we do? You take our children for education—you urge us to cultivate—so we have no time ourselves to look after our herds."

Lira has a medical and a technical school for Nilotic ex-soldiers. The object of the medical school is to reinforce their Army training to a point where ex-orderlies can take charge of dispensaries in the bush.

"Our trouble is to find enough ex-soldiers who've had *any* medical experience," said the officer in charge.

"The Acholi and the Lango considered it beneath their dignity to go into any of the non-fighting branches, so medical orderlies nearly always came from Bantu tribes. We've had to lower our qualifications."

The instructors are mainly Baganda, and the Nilotes do not approve of this.

The medical school has a roomy club and recreation centre, with a library whose selection of English fiction ranges from Defoe to Saroyan. The instructor shook his head.

"I am afraid they need a very simple English. Books like these simply aren't read." And there are not nearly enough books in simple English. One is always meeting this complaint.

Some of the ex-soldiers may bring a wife, and the wife of one of the English instructors gives these women lessons in sewing.

Many of the pupils were naked to the waist and it looked a little odd, at first, to see them toiling over their hemstitching—a new craft alto-

## A RACKET IN ADULTERY

gether to them. They sat gravely in a row while their babies played and wetted on the floor like puppies: fine-looking, sturdy women, neat enough, when they are shown the way, with fingers more used to the hoe than to the needle. Meanwhile their men are at work in the shops learning to be rough tinsmiths, cycle repairers, carpenters and cobblers. They are given a year's course, food and housing, and 15/- a month pocket-money. This is a centre for all Nilotic tribes, whose men are neat with their hands and take quickly—so their English instructor said—to trades.

The idea here, as at Kabale, is not to produce skilled tradesmen but rough village craftsmen who will go back to their homes—one cannot speak of villages—and ply a part-time trade. It remains to be seen how far this will actually work. In the opinion of those who know the Acholi and the Lango, the obstacle is not so much (as with Bantu peoples) the drawing off of skilled men to the towns, as a gradual loss of interest and reversion of the craftsman to the ordinary peasant.

"If even half our men keep up their skill," said the officer, "we shall have done something. The thing is to implant in people's minds the *idea* of the village craftsman." That is something new going into Africa.

## SOROTI

"The Teso are more progressive than they look," I was told beforehand—a little cryptically, for they look much like other Africans. They are in fact half-Hamites, related to the nomadic and still savage tribes of the northern deserts such as the Karamajong and the Turkana.

"They are intelligent, but sometimes cruel," a D.O. said. (One distrusts these rapid generalisations about a whole people—there are over 400,000 Teso—but such is the unavoidable diet of a traveller.) "The first seven cases I tried in this district were cases of men who had beaten their wives to death." The doctor had under treatment a small child whose father had bound its hands together with banana fibre and then set fire to them.

The record books of native courts generally give interesting sidelights on daily life. As among the Acholi, the commonest civil action is for adultery. The standard fine is heavy—150/-. (The Teso grow a great deal of cotton, and are relatively rich.) Of this sum, the court keeps 100/- and awards 50/- compensation to the injured husband. Out of this, the husband pays back a 20/- fine on behalf of his wife, leaving him with a clear 30/-.

"This has led to a bit of a racket," said the officer whose job it is to



## UGANDA

supervise the native courts. "Men are encouraging and even forcing their wives to commit adultery, and then bringing cases for the sake of the thirty shillings."

There is also a black market in wives. An official bride-price has been fixed by the N.A. at five head of cattle, but unofficial prices range up to twenty.

"It's a serious matter, because old men are cornering too many of the brides," my informant added. "One saza chief is believed to have about a hundred wives. We had over fifty on record in nineteen thirty-nine, and since then we think he's doubled the number. Of course, he won't say."

All this does not, perhaps, sound especially progressive. There is a brighter side.

It was among the Teso, who had no indigenous system of chieftainship, that the tiers of semi-elected councils now in fashion all over the Protectorate were first tried and found workable. The Teso took at once to the idea of electing three citizens to each parish council and to the rather complex system whereby each council elects representatives to the body above it, all the way up to a central council for the whole of Teso. And the chiefs seem to have accepted with surprising meekness this curtailment of their powers. One observer explained:

"They had the good sense to bow to the inevitable."

Another, more cynical, added:

"Most of them didn't really care, so long as they kept their wealth and privileges. No question has arisen yet of reducing these."

How is it that a poor chief is an unknown phenomenon? Most are poorly paid. Are all their riches due to bribery and corruption?

"Not so much that, as to the fact that wealth breeds wealth," it was suggested. "There's a good deal of dirty work, of course. For instance the agricultural people gave out pedigree cocks to some of their instructors and model farmers. They had to give it up, because the chiefs simply seized the cocks. But mostly it's just a case of 'to him that hath shall be given'. Say X is made a chief—a man of power. Naturally there's competition to marry his daughters. So X gets fifteen cattle in bride-price instead of the usual five. He uses some of these to get another wife. That means he can cultivate more cotton. He doubles his crop, puts the money into cattle and gets more wives. That makes him richer still, with still more cotton."

"Pretty soon he's got rows of wives, acres of cotton and big herds of cattle. In the old days he'd have been plundered, sooner or later—the African practised equality in a practical way—but now he generally

## THE LIMITS OF PEASANT AGRICULTURE

manages to hang on to his gains. It's a snowball process—just as it used to be at home. It still pays to be a capitalist in Uganda, and the best way to go about it is to get yourself made a chief."

The Teso display a quality rare in all humans, a willingness to take advice. As a result, the standard of cultivation here is said to be the highest in the Protectorate. Strip-cropping is the rule, not the exception. But the resting of land under grass on a fifty-fifty rotation, that other pillar of good husbandry, is practised only rarely, in spite of constant propaganda emanating from Serere, the Government's experimental station, a place organised to the last replicated plot and milk-record by an indefatigable and highly efficient lowland Scot.

When cotton research began, the first object was to breed varieties which yielded well and resisted disease. This the geneticists, by and large, achieved. But, after a sharp upward jump, yields continued to fall. It needed no great prescience to attribute this to the soil's progressive deterioration.

The next step was to find out how to build up and maintain soil fertility, and this, too, the scientists believe they have achieved. The Herculean task is now to get that solution applied by every peasant in the land. Even if that were done, which of course is far from being the case, the task would be barely begun, for already a whole new set of problems looms ahead.

Mr. Low explained it like this:

"The ordinary peasant can't cultivate more than about three acres of cotton on a family basis. Now, at present prices, three acres of cotton can't normally bring in more than ten pounds a year.

"Suppose your peasant wants to cultivate a bigger acreage, he must employ a porter,<sup>1</sup> and to-day a porter will cost him twenty shillings a month. Now, an extra porter won't produce enough extra cotton to pay his wages of twelve pounds a year. So, you see, the peasant comes to a full-stop. He can't increase his production and so he can't improve his standard of living. And a standard of living isn't going to be very grand on ten pounds a year."

These are the limits of peasant agriculture, sharp and clear. And the solution?

"There is only one answer—mechanisation."

That is less a matter for an experimental station than for co-operatives or collective farms or whatever organisation may be favoured for controlling the machinery and hiring it out to individual farmers. The task of combining mechanised, proficient farming with the peasant

<sup>1</sup>A term used in Uganda only, for unskilled labourers.

## UGANDA

ownership and working of land is one of the greatest of East Africa's peck of problems.

It is a big place, Serere, and full of interesting things. One of its functions is to give practical training to Makerere students in the fourth year of their agricultural course.

"There's not a single agricultural student here this year," Mr. Low observed. "Not one. The very existence of these three territories depends on agriculture, and between them they can't raise one young educated man ready to take it on. They all want to be doctors. What's the good of giving medicine to people who haven't enough to eat?"

At first, when they do come, students as a rule dislike the manual work.

"My idea of a good farmer is a man who can turn his hand to anything," said the Scot. "We have a small brick-works here. I put them through that for a start—then, later on, they can show the people how to make simple bricks for their farm buildings. The last batch came to me in a body and complained that I was trying to 'humiliate' them by putting them to puddling clay. I had to explain that farming isn't a thing you do with pen and paper."

The best of those who survive these tribulations are first-rate. The Serere farm manager is Makerere-trained. He is in charge not only of all the day-to-day operations but of a most complicated series of experiments planned to last a hundred years. In all, there are 15 different trials carried out on 450 separate plots, each requiring periodic testing—measurement of the crop, for instance, or daily recording and monthly weighing of native cattle grazed on different kinds of grass. (The search for the best quick-growing, nutritious grasses to use for the three years' resting period proceeds here as almost everywhere else—belatedly.)

This African manager had recently married and set up in a neat four-roomed bungalow, its walls hung with school and college groups.

"It has become very hard indeed for a Christian to marry," he said.

"Why is it harder for a Christian than for anyone else?"

"Because of the expense. The bridegroom must pay the cost of the bride's clothes and also buy clothes for all her relations. This may cost him a thousand shillings. In my own case the bride's clothes alone cost me three hundred shillings. And then the relations . . ."

Relations are indeed a heavy burden. The complex ties which bind a man not merely to close members of his family but to distant cousins and aunts and half-brother's children, not merely of his own but of his wife's also, fetter clerk and doctor no less than peasant and porter. For

## THE KUMI LEPER CAMP

an educated youth, this tight family system may become an incubus. The highest salary melts before the need to finance a brother's wedding-feast or contribute towards a debt incurred by a second cousin, and every increase must be shared with others. No wonder that debt sometimes leads them into those temptations to bribery and corruption so sternly condemned by authority.

In front of a low, veranda'd bungalow, several hundred Scouts and Guides marched and wheeled smartly under a hot afternoon sun. A brass band played zestfully, drums thumped, shoulder-knots fluttered, companies formed up on the parade-ground with rhythmical precision. A gay scene. Only here and there a limping boy, a foot or an arm bandaged, spoke of abnormality. Yet all these Scouts and Guides were lepers.

No doubt the world holds other leper camps no less remarkable; nevertheless a glance at Kumi, run by C.M.S., leaves a lasting impression. Here are 1,200 lepers, including about 400 children, the majority quite normal-looking but some plainly marked with the hideous deformities of the disease. All save the incapacitated seemed to pursue with zest and apparent cheerfulness some occupation. Open-air classes sat under trees, instructed by brisk young leper teachers; in a large, airy central classroom girls squatted on the floor to plait baskets; in the adults' camp, a few miles away, men and women were working in the fields.

In this camp one sensed no atmosphere of misery or frustration. There was suffering, certainly, for leprosy has its agonising stages; but those times pass, and for compensation the leper is offered kindness, sympathy, work and hope.

He is compelled neither to come nor to stay. A leper can live out his life in his own village. Many still do. You may see lepers begging for cents at stations along the railway line, and recently an African version of that medieval institution, the beggars' guild, was discovered: the *entrepreneur* sent out his leper women to beg, received their winnings, and in return fed and housed them in a noisome hovel at Mbale. He did well.

The Kumi settlement has slowly built up such goodwill throughout eastern Uganda that it is kept crowded to full capacity by volunteers. It offers hope of a cure. Each leper is injected every week, and about one-third of all who are treated appear to throw off the disease. Those who do not recover and become 'burnt-out' lepers, hideous to look at, know at least that they will get no worse, and, if they are not too crippled, may live normally.

## UGANDA

In the settlement a leper may bring his family, occupy a decent cottage and cultivate a plot of land. Every fit person must give one day's communal labour a week, and in this way extra crops are grown to feed the helpless cripples and the camp is kept supplied with firewood and water.

The children live separately in boarding schools. One of the hardest tasks is to persuade leper mothers to surrender their children, as they must do if the child is to be kept untainted. There is a 'clean' school, and after a few years these children go out into the world far more advanced in education, and with better chances in life, than the ordinary child, since the Mission arranges and generally pays for their schooling. Men now doing well as teachers, agricultural instructors, medical assistants and in other skilled jobs started life here, and some of the girls, trained in the big Kampala hospital, have returned to nurse lepers at Kumi. The behaviour of leprosy is still obscure, but normally reasonable precautions will prevent infection.

In the nurseries we saw fat, healthy babies being cared for by these Kampala-trained girls—offspring of lepers, but themselves clean. At the other end of the scale we met a villainous-looking person serving a sentence of 15 years for murder. (It is one of Kumi's crosses that they must take in criminals, who cannot be sent to ordinary prisons.) This man was brought before the D.C. on the veranda of the clinic because he had raped one of the leper girls. He was sentenced to walk about in a sack, a badge of shame.

"What else can you do?" the D.C. said. "We can't send him away. We can't fine him—he has no money—and you can't give a leper any physical punishment."

Apart from occasional troubles such as this, generally caused by convicted wrongdoers, there is practically no crime. One seemed to sense here a real community feeling. People looked busy, cheerful and well-fed. Kumi appears to be one of the few institutions in the world which has probably done nothing but good. Christian charity, like practically everything else, is in such short supply these days that it is refreshing to come across a practical example in good working order.

The moving spirit behind it all is one of those patient, competent, single-minded and sometimes masterful women you perhaps encounter more often in the nursing profession than elsewhere.

"I decided to be a leper nurse when I was eleven years old," said Miss Laing. Her voice was precise and quiet. "The nineteen-fourteen war came before I had finished my training and I had to postpone my intention. After the war I thought of marriage, as girls do. I became



“ The Hunter” by Gregory Maloba



“ Women in the Field ”



"Death" by Gregory Maloba

## A BUS MONOPOLY

engaged. But I knew from the first that leper nursing was my vocation. It was necessary to choose between the two. . . . I joined the C.M.S. and came out to Africa twenty-seven years ago. And here I am. . . .”

There she is, queen of 1,200 lepers, sharing her labours with one other European sister and helped by a team of African girls, daughters of lepers. Kumi, set down in a marshy plain among papyrus-choked swamps which merge into the straggling arms of Lake Kyoga—a steamy and malarious district without charm—would seem to most a lonely and a dismal spot. Her view of it is kinder, for she has created here from nothing a thriving community built on standards not of gain and ambition but of compassion and courage. Something of this spirit seems to pervade the air of Kumi.

### MBALE

East of Lake Kyoga the country is flat, monotonous and subject to flooding. Now is the rainy season, and everything is green: yet not the vivid, living green of English pasture or the uplands of Kenya after rain. Sun and heat seem to draw some of the greenness out of the leaf-blades and a haze hangs heavily over the plain, constricting the horizon. After midday, thunderstorms mutter and crackle all round, the air is heavy with moisture from swamp and lake. This is dull, graceless country, infested with white ants and mosquitoes: fertile enough, and at the right season, full of cotton.

The red murram road seemed to roll interminably over the plain, impeccable as ever. Well made in the first place, these roads bear light traffic. One is struck by the dearth of buses—those over-loaded, rattle-trap buses such as bring havoc to the Kenya roads.

Uganda, it appears, passed through a phase when buses, independently owned by Africans and Indians, chewed up the surfaces as they do in Kenya. Accidents grew so frequent, and damage so great, that all these ‘small men’ were swept off the road and a monopoly given to a single Indian-owned company having the resources to run a regular service with properly cared-for and soberly driven vehicles. By this the public’s safety and convenience is better served, but at a higher cost, and a man’s freedom to become a bus owner is taken away. Frustrated Africans mutter against monopoly. Here is the old story again, freedom versus efficiency. As a traveller likely to reach one’s destination without an accident and without getting stuck, one is all for efficiency; were one an African ex-soldier anxious to invest a gratuity in a bus and start a business, one would no doubt take an opposite view.

Out of this open, treeless plain arises suddenly, and most unexpected-



## UGANDA

edly, the rounded bulk of Mt. Elgon, whose summit reaches to over 14,000 feet. Although in height a comparatively minor mountain beside such giants as Kenya and Kilimanjaro, it nevertheless puts on as good a show as they, for the country out of which it rises is lower. Elgon is a lonely mountain, seeming to have no links with any system or range. The summit, across which the Kenya-Uganda border runs, is covered with forest famous for its birds—especially brilliant-plumaged parrots and turacos—and for its caves, now thickly overgrown, but once the dwelling-place of men. Their origin has never been settled. Sir Harry Johnston believed them to have been man-made, and by an extinct race using tools far more advanced than any in the hands of their successors.

Mbale lies on the toe of one of Elgon's foothills, looking over the marshy flats we had traversed, the centre of a densely populated district. The D.C. in charge, with his two assistants, presides over the fortunes of some 700,000 people divided into seven different—in some cases radically different—tribes.

Of these the largest and most industrious is the Bagishu, who live on Elgon's foothills, have a reputation for intelligence and obstinacy (there is no doubt that mountains breed ornery natures) and grow coffee.

Here again you encounter the steep red hillsides, the narrow hurrying streams, the drooping green banana fronds, the little patches of surviving forest, the round thatched huts clinging on to slopes, that you find on the foothills of all these ancient volcanoes. Here again is the shut-in feeling of the valleys and the fresh mountain air of the crests.

As among the Chagga, almost every family has a few hundred coffee trees (*arabica*) which bring in an average income of between 36/- and 50/- a year. Little enough: there is no space for more. Here again the population is tightly packed, rising in places to a density of 700 to the square mile. The coffee set-up is effective, but not on a co-operative basis. The Agricultural department rears and sells seedlings (at two cents each) to growers, and the growers sell their coffee for 3/- a debbi of cherry to pulping stations belonging to a body called the Bagishu Coffee Board, which includes representatives of the Government and of the three firms previously engaged in buying coffee, in competition with each other, from the Bagishu.

This scheme has ironed out the price fluctuations which used to confuse and sometimes dismay the grower. Now he gets a fixed price and the buyers who handle and ship the coffee get a commission of 16/- a ton. The Government's part is to see that everyone plays fair, to main-

## A METROPOLIS OF BATS

tain the nurseries and to give advice, through African instructors, on how to grow better and higher-yielding coffee. Their problem at the moment is to prevent the Bagishu, excited by high prices, from cutting down or rooting out most of their food crops to make way for coffee. From their little pocket-handkerchief plantations they produce annually about 3,000 tons.

The greatest problem that faces Bagishu is an all-too-familiar one: what is to become of the surplus people? As it is, their land is overcrowded. Already some are spilling over into other districts.

"The Government's made no attempt as yet to organise emigration," said the D.C. "Where would the people go? There's land down there"—he waved at the distant steamy swamps—"but they don't like leaving their hills. Meanwhile they're almost as land-conscious as the Kikuyu. I had to disperse a mob with armed police not long ago, when one of the Missions tried to bring into use eight acres they'd been granted years ago."

We sat in the garden on green lawns under a spreading tree while his tall houseboy Jok (it sounded oddly Scottish when his master summoned him) brought us tea with thin sandwiches and thickly buttered scones—an English, pre-war, privileged scene. But a glance beyond the shaded lawns dispelled the illusion. Against a backdrop of Gothic-looking cliffs rearing their stern water-furrowed brows into the mists, a mighty fig tree stood in silhouette at the bottom of the garden. This tree is a metropolis of fruit-bats. They dwell here literally in thousands, encrusting every branch and twig.

Mr. Davidson fetched a gun and fired into the branches. Out flew the bats like a black cloud, with a noise like the rushing of a torrent of water. The very air seemed to shake as their wings beat against it, the tree had a huge black quivering halo. Round and round they fluttered, like leaves in a gale, and gradually they sank back, as it were, into the foliage. It seemed a miracle that the tree could absorb them: almost as if its trunk had opened up to form a funnel into the nether regions.

North of Mbale the country is less hilly and less crowded also; gradually it flattens out to merge into the rolling Karamoja plain. Near the border dwell the Sebei, a race quite different from the Bantu Bagishu: leaner, taller half-Hamites closely akin to Kenya's Nandi and Suk, and in former times generally at war with their neighbours the Karamojong.

This feud is not ended: in 1945 warriors from the north swept down upon the Sebei and carried off 700 head of cattle. The Government

## UGANDA

acted quickly. Lorry-loads of police compelled the Karamajong to round up at selected places thousands of head of stock. Here the Sebei unerringly picked out from these milling mobs the beasts that had been taken. They got back almost every one, the Karamojong lost some of theirs in a heavy fine, and a war between the two tribes was averted. So was law and order upheld and the weaker tribe protected; and the boredom of young warriors thirsting for battle no doubt deepened.

The Karamojong stand unknowingly on the edge of metamorphosis. To-day they live as their fathers lived in the isolation of their lonely pastures. The men go stark naked, plaster their hair with clay and cowdung and affect head-dresses of marabout feathers; the women wear nothing but a string of beads. They follow their cattle according to the seasons, live in the mud hovel of the nomad on milk and blood and care nothing for the trappings of civilisation such as schools and welfare centres. For 50 years Karamoja has been left in peace, more or less, because of its remoteness—its size and the sparseness and conservatism of its people.

Now Uganda needs meat. Karamoja is to be 'opened up'—roads built, traders encouraged, cattle markets set up, schools started: the lid of Pandora's box is to be lifted. The Karamojong will perhaps grow richer, and learn to be ashamed of nakedness. (Healthier? Possibly; there will be more dispensaries, but also more for them to do. At present there is still, it appears, very little venereal disease or immorality; the Karamojong fine their rare adulterers 60 head of cattle; there is also little crime.) Divine discontent—her halo a little tarnished and bloody?—stands on the threshold of Karamoja.

Cattle are now so valuable that some of the elders with no pockets to hold money may drive a thousand pounds' worth of beasts to water. Yet even here, the tsetse fly encroaches. The species *morsitans* already claims over half the country. There is little labour for bush-clearing and the region is so big that it is hard to see how the methods of control hitherto arrived at by the experts can possibly check the fly's advance.

It has long been a sort of tradition in East Africa that all this northern country towards the Abyssinian marches is agriculturally derelict because it is dry and infertile. So it is; but it has taken a Governor who knows Arabia to point out that a lot of it is less dry and infertile than most of the Aden Protectorate and the Hadhramaut, where crops are grown habitually under irrigation. Much of Karamoja is hilly and enjoys a rainfall of 30 inches a year. In Arabia crops are grown on a ten-inch rainfall. It is nonsense, Sir John Hall maintains, to say that nothing can be done with Karamoja and Turkana.

## ADVICE FROM THE HADHRAMAUT

He has not merely said this: he has brought over an Agricultural Officer from Aden to examine the terrain. This officer, satisfied that dams could be built in the Karamoja hills to irrigate soil at their foot potentially more fertile than any in the Hadhramaut, has returned to recruit 20 Arabs to come over and instruct the Karamojong.

The task will not be quick or easy. Some of the irrigation systems in Southern Arabia have been built up over a period of about 3,000 years.

One officer at least, who knows the country and the people, gave a rather sceptical opinion.

"This irrigation by dam-water is very hard work. You have to break the dams every year and build them up again. The Karamojong have no tradition of this kind and they don't like manual labour. They've no wish to cultivate—in fact they despise it. How are you going to get them to do it, except by compulsion?"

So human nature will keep butting in. But as eastern Africa moves steadily towards its grim Malthusian crisis, it will be unable for much longer to neglect its marginal areas. Exploitation is a necessity; even the question of who does the exploiting is secondary. Here, as elsewhere, human nature will no doubt find itself confronted sooner or later with the bleak alternative: work or starve. It is by no means certain that in Africa the first course will be preferred.

## JINJA

We drove south through hilly country towards the Kenya border to call at the phosphate mine, where chunks of rocky hillside are blasted out and crushed to a powder in a sort of outsize concrete-mixer. The powder is bagged up and taken away in lorries: it is as simple as that, or at any rate appears to be.

This deposit of rock phosphate almost on the Kenya-Uganda border is said to be immense, and its significance no less important. There are few soils in eastern Africa which are not either naturally short of phosphates, or rapidly being deprived of them through over-cultivation. The discovery of this deposit in 1940 by Uganda's geologists therefore seemed heaven-sent, especially as it is situated (unlike most mineral discoveries) close to the railway and right in the middle of things. Almost every agricultural station in eastern Africa is now busy testing the effect on crop yields of different dressings of these phosphates. Where conditions are favourable they can double the yields of grain. To the layman the rock looks just like any other bit of Africa, being torn out and crushed with unpretentious-looking machinery in

## UGANDA

charge, in the manager's absence, of an enthusiastic but largely incomprehensible Seychellois clerk.

Turning west again, we drove through flat marshy country and grass thick and tall. From this damp sort of savannah arose now and then the smooth boles of precious mvule trees, and, even as we passed, some were being felled. On our right lay the endless, replicated marshes which drain into Lake Kyoga, on our left the bush-clad shores of Lake Victoria. Soon water covered the road, and we splashed for miles and miles through papyrus swamps that had spilled over a causeway built above the mud.

Driver Bilasio clucked disapprovingly, feeling that Uganda's roads had lost face. (In Uganda's neighbours, most of the roads are at present impassable.) Emerging from the swamps, we soon found ourselves surrounded on all sides by brilliant light-green fields of sugarcane, neatly divided by trolley lines into chequer-board squares. Here and there the long tidy roofs of factories completed a pattern that had become suddenly rectangular and man-made. Without warning we had passed from swamps and bush and naked herds back into the land of industry and money-making. Even the road, conscious of the need to keep up appearances, put on a coat of tarmac.

These sugar plantations belong to Indians, men of great wealth and industry. Here, in neat labour lines beside iron-roofed factories, is the journey's end of many of those skin-clad Ruanda immigrants I saw crossing the Kagera ferry and encamped by the bridge at Kakitumba.

From the windows of Jinja's European bungalows, screened against abundant mosquitoes, you look out over the great inland sea. The shores are flat, low islands rise here and there out of silvery waters. Just behind the town the waters of the gulf narrow and start their long journey into Egypt by leaping over the shallow Ripon Falls. Then come the Owen Falls, hub of the big new hydro-electric scheme. This is the source of the Victoria Nile.

Eighty-five years ago John Hanning Speke, its English discoverer, wrote in his journal:

"It was a sight that attracted one to it for hours. The roar of the waters, the thousands of passenger-fish leaping at the falls with all their might, the Wasoga and Waganda fishermen coming out in boats with rod and hook, hippopotami and crocodiles lying sleepily on the water, the ferry at work above the falls, and cattle driven down to drink at the margin of the lake—made, in all, with the pretty nature of the country—small hills, grassy-topped, with trees in the folds, and gardens

on the lower slopes—as interesting a picture as one could wish to see.”

Now those small hills, grassy-topped, are topped instead with Indian dukas and mud-and-wattle houses, with shops and bungalows and the barracks of the K.A.R.—for Jinja is Uganda’s second largest town. Below the Ripon Falls the main line from Mombasa to Kampala crosses the Nile, and down it the trains carry every season truck after truck-load of cotton and coffee for the markets of the world.

Would Speke have felt his hopes fulfilled, one wonders? The site of Jinja summoned dreams into a mind as a rule severely practical. Of July 30th, 1862, he wrote:

“This day also I spent watching the fish flying at the falls, and felt as if I only wanted a wife and family, garden and yacht, rifle and rod, to make me happy here for life, so charming was the place. What a place, I thought to myself, this would be for missionaries! They never could fear starvation, the land is so rich; and if farming were introduced by them, they might have hundreds of pupils. I need say no more.”

The aftermath was bitter. Back in England Richard Burton, his jealous enemy (they had quarrelled on their previous expedition to Lake Tanganyika) refused to admit Speke’s claims and, with accustomed vigour and ferocity, almost talked and mocked away Lake Victoria, leaving poor Speke little but an unimportant swamp. Then came the tragic end: the meeting of the Royal Geographical Society called at Bath to hear a public debate between the two protagonists; the waiting audience, the confident, experienced Burton ready on the platform; and then, twenty minutes after the performance should have started the news that Speke, known to be nervous of his ordeal, had died of gunshot wounds. The formal verdict was accidental death, but at the time many doubted it. Burton was triumphant; and the irony of it all was that Speke was perfectly right.

Jinja is the capital of Busoga, a district whose inhabitants look and speak much like the Baganda, to whom they are indeed closely related and were in the past generally subservient. Their fertile soil grows much cotton, as well as the usual food crops, but the tsetse is once more the enemy. It has brought the cattle population down from 400,000 to 92,000 within a few years in spite of a ‘fly-free belt’ a thousand yards wide in the path of the advancing insect, as usual ignored by flies other than tsetses which are believed to have carried across the infection.

All along the lake shore the fly carries sleeping-sickness. (This is the

## UGANDA

species *G. palpalis*, which likes heavy shade and plenty of water.) It was here in Busoga that the sleeping-sickness outbreak which killed about a quarter of a million people between 1900 and 1905 was at its worst. At least 100,000 Basoga are reckoned to have died before the entire population of the lake shore, and of the islands on the Lake, was moved out of harm's way. Now, no deaths normally occur from sleeping-sickness in Busoga. Facts like this make the steep rise in population easy to credit.

Parts of the country depopulated 40 years ago are now being carefully resettled, bit by bit. (Where bush is cleared, *palpalis* goes.) The progress of this settlement has been officially described as 'disappointingly slow'. A great deal of fertile land between Jinja and the Kenya border is still quite uninhabited, and it is here that Dr. E. B. Worthington, who has drawn up Uganda's development plan, hopes to launch the first of his 'pilot schemes'.

His proposal is to take a block of country of rather more than 500 square miles and make it capable of supporting 6,000 families. At first men would be brought in as paid hands, and the Government itself, employing a team of European experts, would clear, afforest, plough and fence the land, as the case might be, setting up a proper system of balanced and productive agriculture. Later, when the project had become a going concern, the experts would gradually withdraw and hand over, if possible, to some form of co-operative management by the new settlers. Hand in hand with scientific use of the land would go the building of villages complete with schools, hospitals, churches, shops and social centres.

This scheme of Dr. Worthington's<sup>1</sup> is the first serious attempt yet made in East Africa to work out a practical alternative to that inefficient peasant agriculture which is failing so disastrously to cope with the rise in population. It also includes the first proposals for resettling population which break away from merely perpetuating the conditions they are designed to relieve—subsistence farming. The aim of the pilot schemes is to raise produce for sale as well as for consumption.

Tanganyika's groundnut project steals the limelight, but in the long run Dr. Worthington's pilot schemes may be of more importance to East Africa. For while the first aim of the groundnutters is to produce more margarine—a necessary but limited objective—the pilot schemes' grand objective is a solution of the basic problem of tropical Africa: how to bring the people on from peasant agriculture to some-

<sup>1</sup>*A Development Plan for Uganda.* E. B. Worthington, Uganda Government Press, Entebbe.

## BUSOGA SCHEME

thing that will support a rising population on a better standard of life.

Are the Worthington schemes practical? Can they succeed? Only experience can give the answer. They have been officially blessed, indeed blessed with enthusiasm; but they cost money and they need equipment. Uganda has enough cash in the 'kitty' to make a start, but now there is an acute shortage of tackle. Mechanical clearing of bush is as essential a part of the Worthington project as of the groundnut scheme, but every available bulldozer and tractor goes to the ground-nutters, not to Uganda.

In time, no doubt, this will be dealt with, and the first project started. There will be many snags, not the least being the peasant's conservatism. The tempo of his accustomed life and the tempo of a mechanised collective farm—for that is what these projects are, although the author carefully avoids this phrase with its dubious associations—are two different things, and will be hard to reconcile. (The Russians found it impossible without ruthless compulsion and wholesale evictions, starvings and shootings.) Management, the axis on which all turns, will be hard and tricky.

There are snags; they may or may not prove fatal. Should the first pilot scheme make a good start then this fertile, grassy, sparsely-populated belt of Busoga may yet prove to be the hope and the cynosure of eastern Africa.

Among the amenities of Jinja is something new in Africa, a women's club, and here I met the Scottish Welfare Officer employed by the Government to get this and others like it on their feet. Once a week the club holds sewing parties and classes in basic English.

In Jinja most of the members, unlike the vast majority of their country sisters, are town-dwellers and already literate, as a rule wives of clerks, teachers, police and army N.C.O.s—the feminine *élite*. They need a club's amenities more than peasant women who are too busy in their shambas for sewing parties. So for one afternoon a week these idle hands are busied and the devil kept at bay.

The Welfare Officer, new to her job and full of zest, reports enthusiasm among Basoga and Baganda wives. One of the first six women students to enter Makerere, an ex-teacher, is now her assistant, and, as an organiser, a great success.

Uganda is taking 'welfare' seriously. It has given this rather nebulous conception point by linking it with propaganda under a new department of Public Relations and Social Welfare—a cumbrous title, but one that has not been allowed to bemuse the staff gathered together by



## UGANDA

an able and keen young officer, Mr. Charles Gayer, taken from the administration.

Combined welfare-and-propaganda 'teams' go out into the countryside to deliver a message not just of general benevolence but of specific intent: that is to say, each team has to put across some particular point that is relevant to that particular audience at that particular time.

There are four such outfits, one for each province. In Buganda the team is at the moment concerned with the building of small dams, improved housing and the grading of chilis; in Acholi and Lango—oddly enough, it seemed to me, in this huge, sparsely populated country—on how to avoid road accidents; and in the Western Province on, *inter alia*, the virtues of soya beans. This last demonstration ends with the serving out of savoury dishes to the audience, a highly popular move; but when one of the Buganda team saw the performance he shook his head, saying:

"That sort of thing's all very well for backward places like Ankole and Kigezi, but it would never do for Buganda!"

"But why not?"

"We Baganda are too advanced."

Puzzled, his colleagues inquired why the well-known sophistication of the Baganda should vitiate soya bean propaganda.

"The Baganda would expect the dishes to be poisoned," was the reply.

These teams convey their messages mainly by acting short plays. Each consists of a European leader and about twelve Africans who are put through short courses in work of this kind, and show a natural aptitude for acting. Sometimes they write the plays themselves. They go round in lorries with a mobile cinema attached, combining entertainment with instruction in a nicely balanced blend. In the north, for instance, they have lately been taking with them on tour cobblers, carpenters and tinsmiths, who sit down beside the lorries and practise their trade in full view of the audience, attracting much attention, and so preparing the way for the return of ex-soldiers trained to set up on their own.

The whole performance is 'a day in the country' in reverse, an outing for sensation-starved country bumpkins. I was disappointed never to hit off a demonstration, but those who have seen them report the acting to be full of verve and humour and audiences to be enthusiastic and large. People have walked 15 and 20 miles to see the show.

The need for colour and excitement in the lives of English villagers was partially met by mummers and strolling players, until cheap transport, big towns and universal literacy blasted them. The same need waits to be filled in Africa, no less strong because it is generally

## A FUTURE UNIVERSITY

inarticulate. (What a chance here for travelling fairs and circuses!) The Uganda Government has had the imagination to link this craving for entertainment with its own wish to din improving messages into the heads of the masses. An almost limitless future seems to open up before this method of public enlightenment, provided it can be managed with skill and vision, and that ways can be found to follow up and enlarge the gospel's impact.

### MAKERERE HILL

The town of Kampala sprawls over a number of flat-topped hills. From any one of them you look down on trees, a rolling landscape and white buildings thrusting here and there through greenery: the ugly Indian shops and ramshackle African houses are hidden. One of these hills is called Makerere, and on it stands that college whose name sooner or later enters into any conversation about African advancement from West Nile to Rufiji delta, from the Congo to Zanzibar.

Makerere is not yet a large place. It has a teaching staff of 22, all Europeans, and under 200 students. But its hopes for the future are big. A model of the college 20 years hence, done by a London architect, shows accommodation for 1,200 students, 400 of them women. At present this seems visionary, and its realisation will depend not only on the ability of the British taxpayer to provide several million pounds, but on the even more problematic ability of the schools to turn out more qualified youths and maidens.

That depends less on the inherent brainpower of the young entry than on a plentiful supply of teachers. And the future supply of teachers rests very largely on the readiness of the young men now at Makerere, or soon to go there, to take up teaching as a profession. At present only 20 out of the 200 are studying education. Twice that number are bent on medicine. Unless the teaching profession wins more recruits, it is hard to see how half the model buildings can grow into realities—or, if they should do so, be filled.

The main block already built stands up squarely on its hill, clean and solid in cream paint and red tiles set against lawns as green as any English college's. It is flanked on each side by two simple and respectable chapels of exactly the same size and eminence: a Roman Tweedledum and a Protestant Tweedledee. Green grass, fine trees, flowering shrubs, brilliant sunshine, hard shadows, the dark-skinned students moving about in shorts and shirts as fresh and white as daisies, make a scene almost unreal in its resplendence.

What can one say of these young men of destiny? First, that they

## UGANDA

have no common origin. They are drawn from a territory larger than Britain, France, Spain and Portugal, Italy, Belgium and the Netherlands combined, and from a population of at least 13,000,000. They are of all kinds, from the tall black sons of Acholi warriors to the slight soft-featured offspring of coastal merchants. Nearly half come from Uganda, the country with the largest and most intensive record of missionary effort. (In 1946, of the 166 male students, 78 came from Uganda, 53 from Kenya and 19 from Tanganyika.) There is no 'Makerere type'.

You can say also that these students are the intellectual cream of East Africa. This would not be wholly true, because in a region where, as a whole, perhaps less than a quarter of the children get even the first stages of schooling, you are skimming the cream from one quart out of each gallon of milk. And the cream is taken off by that clumsy, leaking spoon, the examination.

You can say with more certainty that these students will leave college to become the intellectual leaders of their people. Not political leaders only, although politics, as among students the world over, fills the lives of many; for years to come East Africa will look to Makerere for those trained doctors, teachers, agriculturists and vets on which material progress mainly depends. To be a Makerere man has a certain *cachet*. It awakes hope in a European, respect or envy in a young African and suspicion in an old one.

The new Principal, Dr. W. Lamont, is a Scots professor of moral philosophy. In the war years, under the late Principal who will long be remembered for his wisdom and humanity, the college made do with a tithe of the necessary staff. Now young men arrive in numbers from British universities, and these African students get more individual coaching than their British or American contemporaries. The proportion of teaching staff to students is about one to nine. Yet, while eight qualified scientists teach medical students-to-be, there is no instruction in history or in education.

Being human, these students are not satisfied. To begin with they want degrees. Makerere is not yet a university, although it means to become one. The next stage will come when its students sit for external degrees of the University of London, but in the opinion of the Academic Board they have not yet reached that standard. Nevertheless the students still want degrees. Sometimes they think that Europeans are only making excuses to hold them back. They believe that a degree would give them that status for which they are always so desperately seeking.

## DEMAND FOR DEGREES

Because the college will not yet grant degrees, a few of the more impatient and resourceful go to Fort Hare in South Africa, or even to England, if they can squeeze in. To do this they must raise the money from relatives and well-wishers; at Makerere, everything is free. Their respective Governments not only pay their fees but clothe them and provide them with pocket-money, at a cost of about £300 a year each. Not for them the cares of an American student 'working his way through' by delivering milk, stoking furnaces and doing domestic chores. These African students, struggling with unfamiliar subjects in a foreign tongue, could not cope with both kinds of work, but inevitably this official benevolence tends to foster in them an attitude of 'the world owes me a living' rather than the vigorous self-help kindled in American students.

"We want degrees—now." That was one demand. Another:

"Why do they refuse us a law school? We wish to be trained as lawyers!"

This was at an informal meeting with a group of students after tea; they talked about their hopes, careers, and complaints. To the suggestion that one cannot start everything at once, they were no more sympathetic than the young generally are to this valid but rather dreary argument.

"Why do you think a law school so important?"

"We want to fight our own cases. Africans are not given a fair deal by Indian and European lawyers."

As for proof . . .

"Some years ago the Chagga brought a big case.<sup>1</sup> Thousands of shillings were raised for it, yet the Indian lawyer lost it for them."

"The fact that a lawyer loses a case is no proof that he pleaded badly. Why do you think an African lawyer would have won?"

"He would have done it cheaper for his own people. And he would have put more of his mind into it. Therefore, he would have been successful."

Two highly questionable assumptions. . . . This habit of attaching moral merit or obloquy to colour works both ways. We all know our own side of it: how some Europeans regard Africans—the whole lot—as lazy and stupid, while others regard them with equal totality as virtuous and put-upon. Africans are often just as sweeping. These students really believed that a lawyer would be selfless and triumphant

<sup>1</sup>This refers to a case brought, at the instigation of certain agitators, against the Kilimanjaro Native Co-operative Union in 1937. It was before the courts for six years, and a judgment delivered in 1942 upheld the Union. (See p. 86.)

## UGANDA

because he was black. It did not occur to them that, black or white, he might act like a lawyer first and a racist second, fighting the case as astutely as he was able and making as much out of it as he could.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps the greatest thing that Makerere is trying to do is to plant in Africa standards of a different order, intellectual standards, beside which race and origin are seen to be irrelevant—to introduce into Africa the concept of the life of the mind.

Meanwhile the students see the mirage of salvation in a law school and in degrees; they demand also wider opportunities in Government service. Some opportunities are there already, but poorly paid; and, as is only natural, they fix their eyes on the prizes still out of reach: the senior jobs with their high pay and prestige, those twin lodestars of the African young.

Of the student who had been hottest in demands for a law school, the Dean said:

"He wanted to be a doctor, but his Government persuaded him to switch to Arts in order to become a sort of legal adviser to the native courts. He did so, and then, in a fit of economy, the post he'd been going to fill was cut out of the estimates. It was too late by then for him to switch back to science." And so a disgruntled politician was made. (The student was a Kikuyu, who are politicians in the womb.) There is sometimes a price to be paid for being a ward of officialdom.

Even at an embryo university for the young of a ruled race, politics are not the whole stuff of life. There are men who follow the thread of interest into other worlds: a Jaluo, for instance, who is a born biologist and has gone on to Cambridge, and a Masai, still at college, with an artist's eye and a painter's talent.

It was the notion of Mrs. Trowell, the Art School's founder and head, not merely to teach her students how to paint, but to entice out of them the view of life which she believed them to possess, and to show them how this might be clothed in line and colour; in short, to equip them with the technique to create for themselves a native African art, not to train them to see their surroundings in a European way. To hold to this idea through many difficulties and against the scepticism of them the view of life which she believed them to possess, and to show Mrs. Trowell fortunately has more than her fair share of these.

<sup>1</sup>Protectors of the aborigines surely propagate racialism no less than exponents of white supremacy when they assume, as they sometimes seem to, that Africans must be always in the right. Were their assumption valid, Africans would not be human but of another order, inherently superior to us and therefore inherently different; true equality means that they are also, like ourselves, as predatory, self-seeking, irrational, obstinate and lazy as circumstances permit, and as all history proves.

## THE ART SCHOOL

Her greatest difficulty has been the lack of an artistic tradition to build on. Seldom can so large a collection of human beings as is to be found in East Africa have displayed down the centuries so little predilection for self-expression in art. The natives of these regions have produced, so far as is known, no permanent architecture, no carved figures, idols or masks, no textiles; they have not even experimented with the shapes and decoration of earthenware pots. Certain tribes among them, however, have shown skill and dexterity in their basket work, and here and there a sense of design and colour has broken through, as in the crude but vivid patterns on warriors' shields and in beadwork adornments.

How can you demonstrate to students who have never before handled brush or pencil what is meant by a design or a picture, without showing them pictures which will from the outset influence and perhaps distort their vision? Mrs. Trowell's response to this dilemma was to use West African and Congolese designs for a starter, as it were, on the assumption that these might be the more mature expression of a feeling and a vision latent throughout the continent. (Why it is that art in West Africa is so much more highly developed than in the East is a fascinating question that has never, so far as I know, been satisfactorily answered.)

East Africans took quickly and often well to the making of designs and clay models which owe nothing to the European tradition and everything to West and Central Africa.

"We teach them to doodle," Mrs. Trowell said; and out of the doodles have grown designs of bold outline and brilliant colour. Several of these have been bought by a Manchester firm to be printed on textiles.

In the lobby of the Art School stands a carving in wood, about three feet high. A massive and formidable human figure with the pointed ears of a wolf and an expression implacable and sorrowful is hunched over the limp and tiny figure of a man crushed between his knees and gripped in pitiless hands. This is 'Death', the most successful piece of work, hitherto, of the most remarkable of Mrs. Trowell's pupils, Gregory Maloba.

Now an instructor in modelling and sculpture, Gregory Maloba is a small, quiet, spectacled Bantu Kavirondo from the Lake Province of Kenya. Until he came to Makerere he had never attempted, or thought of attempting, any form of artistic expression; in his tribe there is no tradition of sculpture or modelling and so far as is known no ancestor of his has ever used wood except to burn or sit upon; yet here he is, a lone protagonist, turning out works of merit by any standard and of

## UGANDA

genius by the standards of a people standing on the threshold of art. His small clay figures show observation, feeling and humour; now and again he braces himself for a more ambitious project and captures in wood a hint of the elemental, the enduring; of the vitality of the tribal peasant life from which he springs.

"At first the students think it's all quite pointless, a dreadful waste of time," said their director. "Of course some of them never get beyond that. But a certain number—a surprising number, really—find it growing on them. They get intrigued. And before you know where you are they're coming here in their spare time messing about on their own—and what's more, enjoying themselves."

Such a one is Tombo, a small, slender, bronze-skinned Kenya Masai with curiously light, intense eyes. He renders in crayon the flat subtle tones of his native land and the little cattle cherished of his people.

Few young men can swing between such wide extremes as Tombo. On one hand his father's *manyatta*, deep in cow-dung and alive with flies, on the bare illimitable plain: on the other, the college precincts with their clean, airy lecture-rooms, their debating societies and football matches and music recitals. There, the half-naked old men of the tribe, migrating in biblical fashion behind their herds with the sanction of the witchdoctor; here, the company of English professors of science or philosophy, of sophisticated young Baganda, of earnest medicos with their microscopes and dissections. Even the food: curdled milk and bullock's blood from a gourd rinsed in urine, and afternoon tea with the Dean's wife.

He must find it hard, surely, to bridge the two worlds?

"I do not wish to lose touch with my people," Tombo said. "In the holidays I go back to the life of the Masai. It is a good life. I go out to herd cattle with the others. No Masai, you know, can give up his love of cattle. I know them all and I love them all and when I return they recognise me, but at first they do not like my smell. As time goes by they get used to me. . . . And the food? Masai food is more wholesome. Here, I get tired of bananas. But Christians are not allowed to drink blood."

"And the young men who have not been to school—do they distrust you?"

"They do not understand why I should want to leave to seek education. But I know that education must come. If we Masai do not realise this, others will become top-dogs over us. For myself, I wish to go back to teach at the Government school at Narok, and help to educate our children. I do not wish to live away from my people."



Lake Nakuru, with flamingoes





Elephants  
Hippos



## WOMEN STUDENTS

He puts some of his love into his sketches: the flat thorn-trees, the bare horizon, the dun-coloured backsides of the cattle on which, in the holidays, he soothes green-sickened eyes. The simplicity and spareness of the life seems to find its way into Tombo's drawings.

Yet there is talk of closing the Art School because it does not fit into London's syllabus for external degrees—a tragedy, surely, of the sausage-machine.

There are women students at Makerere: eleven of them. Most had already started their careers as teachers and were picked out by their Governments for outstanding qualities, but this year the first four have entered by competitive examination with the men.

These students are friendly, quiet and shy to meet and—to a stranger—rather enigmatic. They do not talk fluently, as the men do, of their ambitions and grievances. The African tradition that women must play second fiddle in all matters of importance will die hard. A little of it still seems to cling to these emancipated young ladies, all from literate and to some extent educated homes whose heads are teachers, clerics or chiefs. (Three of the eleven are from Kenya, one from Zanzibar and the rest from Uganda.)

This shyness is only a surface quality, I was told—a form of good manners.

"Our girls," said their warden, an earnest, warm-hearted American who is their staunchest champion, "take a fine part in student activities. Sala is secretary of the History Society, Margaret vice-chairman of the Entertainments Committee. The women students maintain a play centre for staff children, they play hockey and tennis, and everyone of them has learned to dance!"

Mrs. Pratt-Nickols smiled proudly at her flock.

"They look meek as lambs, I guess, to a visitor. But if you would come and share our lives for a while . . . Sometimes the girls laugh too loud and sit up too late, they forget to turn off the lights, they complain about the food, try absurd hair-styles and forget to dust their rooms. They criticise the College, denounce the Government, settle the world's affairs to their own satisfaction, and sit up half the night after College functions talking of everything from careers to boys. . . ."

"To me it's a miracle that a house so like a college dormitory anywhere exists right here at Makerere—just two years after the first women made their first entry."

There is even a Moslem girl, the first one: Esha Shariff of Zanzibar. Here she walks freely and with the poise of a queen; in the vacations she must retire behind the veil and black *bui-bui*. African by adoption,

## UGANDA

she is wholly Asiatic by blood; small, neat, slim, fair-skinned and immensely vivacious, she makes most Bantu girls appear by contrast a trifle gauche. A moving spirit of the dramatic club, a slogger at work, an excellent cook, a 'good influence' with the others, she looks forward to returning to her teacher's career, having hitherto spurned offers of marriage.

One senses a sort of stolidity about African women, born perhaps of centuries of toil and submission, that clings even to the wing-tips of these soarers—swallows of the first intellectual summer, pecking at new notions, new ways of thought that even require new words to express them.

"How can we build a literature in our own vernacular," asked one of the Baganda women, "when we have no word for ecstasy?"

The college aims at a mixed faculty, but the only African who has so far held a senior post—Mr. Bulamu Makasa, a Yale B.A. in political economy—has resigned to become Prime Minister of Bunyoro. Each student spends his first two years taking a general course in Arts or in Sciences, sitting for a Higher Studies certificate at the end. (The standard of this is roughly equivalent to the English Higher Schools certificate.) Those who pass—about one-third drop out at this hurdle—then start to specialise in one of the four schools.

That which reaches to the highest standard is the medical, which entails five more years' study, and is mainly for this reason far the most popular. The students who complete this course are not qualified to practise anywhere outside East Africa, but within it they are recognised as competent doctors and the level set in their finals does not fall far short of the level of British medical schools. Would-be vets need four years, teachers and agriculturists a further three years. Everyone who completes his course has a job waiting in the service of his Government. No question of unemployment has arisen, or seems likely to arise, for the successful, but for those who drop out on the way a 'failed B.A.' problem will doubtless arise.

Makerere is to have a sort of step-child; an Institute of Social Research, independent but associated. Money has been voted (£67,000 from the British taxpayer) and the first director appointed. The social problems of East Africa, so hotly discussed with so little knowledge, are soon to be given over to the objective analysis—at least one hopes it will be objective—of trained assessors.

All this means expansion, which in turn means land on which to build. Makerere hill belongs to the Baganda. That part of it already sold to the college is fully occupied; more land is therefore needed, and

## THE SPEED OF PROGRESS

this the native government of Buganda has so far refused to sell. No people press more strongly for education than the Baganda, but they do not seem to want it to be carried out on their land.

With all its limitations this college, holding the shape of the future in its hand, is a fascinating and even an inspiring place. Its builders—among whom Sir Philip Mitchell has a high place—had the faith to plan for something beyond the capacity of the territories at that time to furnish, and its present governors are still so planning.

At the head of these stands Sir Geoffrey Northcote, an ex-D.C. and ex-Governor, whose wisdom, care and experience are given in full measure to the work; and if some are filled with a natural impatience, students crying for immediate degrees and tutors roundly condemning Governments for sending only a trickle of indifferently grounded students, it may yet be remembered that this same Chairman of the Council, a vigorous person by no means in his dotage, was in his youth, the first man to introduce the rudiments of law and government into what is now one of the most ordered and prosperous districts of Kenya; and that he bears on his body the mark of a spear hurled into his ribs by a young Kisii warrior who had never seen a white man before.

That warrior's son might to-day be a Makerere student, for the spear found its mark only 30 years ago; it is indeed the case that a young man now studying biology at Cambridge and booked to return to the faculty as a tutor comes from this same district, Kavirondo. The coach's progress may seem painfully slow to those pulling it up the hill, but, in the perspective of history, seldom can a vehicle have rushed forward at such breakneck speed.

## KAMPALA

Makerere is one of Kampala's hills, Mengo another. On its mild heights, you pass along an avenue of jacarandas to a palisade of reeds. Inside the gates you halt beside a large bungalow roofed in corrugated iron. A messenger conducts you to an inner office full of files and occupied by a tall, lean man in the customary dress of the Baganda, a white *kanzu* with a tweed jacket. He wears hexagonal glasses, stoops a little, has a keen, eager expression and a quick nervous manner; he looks rather like a youngish don, or a busy barrister. This is Kawalya Kagwa, Prime Minister of Buganda.

By birth, training and intelligence he is well suited to a job which is, I suppose, the biggest and perhaps the hardest held by any African in these territories. His father was Sir Apolo Kagwa, one of the strongest of the Bahima chiefs found in control of the country when a British

## UGANDA

Protectorate was set up. For many years the elder Kagwa held the office of Katikiro—Prime Minister—now filled by his son, and wrote (in Luganda) several learned books on the history and traditions of the clans.

The younger Kagwa's predecessor was murdered on the steps of the Anglican cathedral, as an act of political venom, about a year ago. The Katikiro before that was deported for sedition after the outbreak of internecine strife which led to serious riots in January, 1945. Mr. Kagwa does not, therefore, step into comfortable shoes. The King, now just twenty-one, is away at Cambridge studying economics and history, leaving his kingdom very largely to Katikiro Kagwa and his two fellow ministers, the Treasurer and Chief Justice.

The young king is fortunate to find such a man as Mr. Kagwa to fill a post which carries prestige and wealth but also much hard work, jealousy and possibly danger. These Baganda feuds go deep and have a certain Borgian quality. Only recently an attempt was made to dispose of the son of the murdered Katikiro by drenching his blankets in paraffin and setting fire to them while he was asleep.

Kawalya Kagwa, however, is the man for the times. Educated, like several of the wealthier Baganda, in Ceylon, and later trained in Government offices, he became the first African to hold a commission in the K.A.R. and saw service abroad as well as in Africa. His English is perfect, his manners delightful and his energy dynamic. I have met few Africans of his stature and his quick, lively mind.

Here in Buganda, the state which set its stamp on adjacent kingdoms and gave its name to the Protectorate, you see the prototype of that system of native government now in force all over the territory. It is at first sight a cumbrous system, but it seems to work, and now it is in the interesting condition of receiving into its old bottles the new wine of popular representation. Whether or no the bottles will hold remains to be seen.

We visited first the headquarters of a parish or muluka: a simple little whitewashed mud-and-wattle building with an earth floor and a raised earthen dais at one end, crowded with men in white *kanzus*. As we entered they flopped to their knees and clapped their hands three times and, all together, intoned a greeting.

"They are thanking us for the honour we are doing them by coming here," said the Katikiro. They remained standing until he had taken his seat.

Once a week the muluka council meets in this little hall—built by the voluntary unpaid labour of the citizens—to talk over parish affairs

## VISIT TO A PARISH COUNCIL

under the chairmanship of the muluka chief, an official appointed by the Kabaka. Until the reforms of 1945 this council was composed of the chief's stooges, but now it has a majority of members chosen by the people themselves in open election. At each of these elections the taxpayers—and every taxpayer has a vote regardless of other qualifications—choose four men, two to represent them on this parish council and two to go forward to the rural district, the gombolola.

In the main the muluka council functions as a talking shop and puts up suggestions to the gombolola, but it also carries on that old Baganda custom obliging every able-bodied man to give free help to the community. There may be a well to be cleaned, a new roof for the local school, a track to be cleared to market. More and more, of course, these things tend to be paid for by the Government, but sometimes the money is not there and the people turn out as they used to do. It is the job of the muluka council to decide when and where.

"And if a man refuses?"

"It seldom happens," replied the Katikiro. "The pressure of public opinion is strong. If it should, the muluka council can have him up before the gombolola court, and if the case is proved, he'll be fined."

This free labour for a man's local community is a different thing from the free labour he was once obliged to give to the Kabaka or to the county chief, at the whim of his superior. That has been abolished, or rather commuted into a cash payment which now goes to the Buganda Government. Until last year this sum was 10/- a year for each taxpayer, now it is 14/-. The annual poll tax to the Protectorate Treasury—of which one-quarter is returned to the Buganda Treasury—is 15/-, making a total of 29/- a head, a high figure in the African scale of direct native taxation. But then the Baganda are relatively rich.

Next we came to a gombolola headquarters, the same thing on a larger scale. Once more everyone knelt, clapped three times and greeted the Katikiro. Here again we met the chief appointed by the the Kabaka, and a council consisting of the chiefs of each muluka plus the two citizens elected by each muluka council. This, too, has a majority of the elected, and sends forward two of its members to the saza council above it.

The gombolola chief has a good deal more to do than the head of the parish. He sits as a magistrate, for one thing, and collects the poll tax, and so his office is full of clerks busy with slips of paper of different colours, the ubiquitous forms even more cherished by African bureaucrats than by our British ones.

Whirled along at dizzy speed by the impellent Katikiro, we arrived

## UGANDA

next at a county headquarters and were greeted by a dignitary known as the Kago. (There are 20 saza, or county, chiefs in Buganda, and each one has a different title.) An affable, shrewd and fluent character, the Kago, with his horn-rimmed spectacles, might have been an American business man. His saza has a population of about 150,000, including 29,000 aliens, mostly Banyarunda.

"After they have paid tax for three years they can become Baganda. We encourage them. We need their labour," the Kago said.

"My day starts at eight-fifteen," he continued, "when any member of the public can come to see me about anything he wishes. At nine o'clock I am in court. I sit daily, assisted by two gombolola chiefs and two unofficial members of the saza council. Later in the day I have the office work to attend to. All the tax comes in here from my gombololas, to be checked and counted by my clerks."

The Kago is a strong personality, with tradition and the complete machine at his back; the elected majority on his council, potentially his master, would, one felt, at the present stage of their sophistication, still be at his command. Time was too short to allow a private talk with any of these members elected from the lower councils, but a few days later I received a letter from the 'non-official representatives resident in Kyaddondo county', who, they wrote: "had no opportunity to present our grievances to you on the occasion of your visit, being prevented by our saza chief from doing so." (I think time, rather than the Kago, was the culprit.)

The writers listed six 'grievances' on which they sought redress; here are extracts from the letter:

1. There is much anxiety and fear among us Baganda regarding the proposed inter-territorial organisation, services and amalgamation of territories. It should never be forgotten that Buganda is so to speak a 'sui generis', being only a Protectorate and having its own 1900 treaty with the Imperial Government for protection. . . .

2. As regards excess profits, amounting to something like Shs 200,000/-, a surplus from the sale of agricultural produce such as maize, coffee, etc., which money has been given back to us for agricultural development, we have been left entirely in the dark as to what use it has been put. Nor does the Buganda Government care to give us information regarding this money.

3. The recent enactment of two laws, viz.: (a) a township planning law and (b) the law to enable the Kabaka to acquire land compulsorily. As to the first law, we are not yet in a financial position to put up such expensive buildings. Nor is it in our own interests that our land should

## THE KAGO

be acquired compulsorily by the Kabaka for so-called 'public services' which is merely the 'thin end of the wedge' leading towards forfeiture of ownership over our own land in our own country.

4. The education which is being given us is far from satisfactory or sufficient. We would more strongly advocate mass education than higher education, which former should be provided free. . . .

5. We most strongly resent Government's fixing prices for our agricultural produce and their refusal to grant us direct export and import licences. . . .

6. In the field of medical treatment we feel we are not adequately catered for. . . . Heaps and heaps of money is being spent on Mulago hospital, some of which could be diverted to the establishment of feeder medical services in up-country districts. . . .

Such a letter would suggest that there is (as one might expect) a considerable and probably growing under-current of dissatisfaction with the people's own native government. To relieve this, the malcontents look to the Protectorate Government, but that is gradually shedding its powers; few seem to realise as yet that you cannot simultaneously have more self-government and more direct intervention by the British. To eat one's cake and have it is perhaps the commonest and the saddest of social desires.

The Kago, the Katikiro and I sat in our host's large, airy bungalow drinking tea and eating cakes handed round by two shy, attractive girls in pig-tails, on holiday from the C.M.S. girls' secondary school. The Kago apologised for his wife's absence; she was in Kampala, he said, attending a committee meeting.

"The Kago has twelve children," said the Katikiro. The Kago beamed and nodded. The Katikiro added, a little sadly: "He has beaten me. I have only six."

"That would seem a lot to a European."

The Katikiro looked severe. "We want as many children as possible. Europeans limit their families from selfish motives, because they wish to spend everything on personal enjoyment. Education is expensive, but we prefer to spend the money on our children."

The Kago added: "We hear that Europeans have methods to limit the numbers of their children. We do not at all approve of that. We shall not follow suit."

Rich men like the Katikiro and the Kago can pay the school fees of even 12 children without making personal sacrifices, but poor men might not always agree with the opinions of these notables.

Education, though heavily subsidised by the Government and con-



## UGANDA

ducted mainly by the Missions, is not free. Fees contribute only a small proportion of the cost. They range from a shilling up to 12/- a term in the primary schools, and in boarding schools that is to say for all secondary education) up to £15 or £20 a year. At this stage, however, only exceptionally rich fathers pay the fees. Secondary education of most children is paid for by their native (local) Governments.

After the Kago had proudly displayed his jail—the inmates were out cutting grass—we proceeded to the heart and centre of the Buganda state, the busy offices on Mengo hill.

In the council-chamber a group of tall men in *kanzus* rose respectfully as the Katikiro entered. These were members of a sort of standing committee of privilege considering such intricate matters as the registration of land titles and the succession of clan leaders. The Baganda people are grouped into ancient clans which cut across divisions of caste and geography and still count for much. Each clan has its hereditary leader and its totem.

"I belong to the grasshopper clan," said the Katikiro, as he leapt appropriately along, flushing coveys of clerks at their typewriters.

Just at present the clan system is causing many complications and arguments in high places. The time approaches when the young Kabaka must take a wife. By tradition he should marry into certain clans and eschew others. His wishes are said to incline towards a girl of one of the forbidden clans. A man takes the clan of his mother, thus the future heir to the throne would belong to a clan debarred by tradition from providing the ruler.

Not only that, but in the elaborate ritual which surrounds the coronation, the leader of this clan, whose totem is a monkey, must tie the bark-cloth round the head of the Kabaka, and in so doing he symbolically becomes the father of the young king.

And so, in an involved way dear to the tortuous mind of the Bagan-da, in marrying a girl of the monkey clan the Kabaka would be marrying his own sister. . . . A difficult business, which provides a fascinating topic throughout Buganda. The younger elements would not themselves lose sleep over the marriage, but the loyalty of some among them is dubious for other reasons, and many of the older generation would be genuinely shocked. Meanwhile the young Kabaka (a keen footballer) pursues his studies at Cambridge, and discussion simmers until his return.

Until after the riots of 1945, when for three days Kampala was paralysed, the Buganda parliament remained as it had been since 1900, a gathering of hereditary chiefs and nobles. It is now a cross between

## THE BUGANDA PARLIAMENT

Lords and Commons. Out of a total of 89 members, 58 are still either the paid servants or nominees of the Kabaka and 31 are representatives of the people. You could hardly call this council free and democratic, but the wedge has been quite deeply inserted.

The revenue derives mainly from the local tax of 14/-, partly from one-quarter of the general poll tax returned by the Protectorate Government, and partly from court fines. Last year the total came to £115,000. About two-thirds of this goes to pay the salaries of chiefs, clerks and other functionaries.

Buganda has the largest and richest native administration in East Africa, governing over one-third of the Protectorate's population. British officials are having less and less of a direct say. There are now no District Commissioners in Buganda, only a Resident in Kampala with two or three 'Agents' under him whose function is mainly that of liaison officers. The Protectorate's technical services, however—agricultural, medical, forestry and so on—still operate throughout Buganda.

In short, this native kingdom is at that interesting point in its history when the hammer of democracy—an imported weapon—is beginning to crack the feudal mould. Tap, tap, tap goes the hammer, softly at first, here in the council-chamber on Mengo hill, but here also feudal barons have an armoury. It is an office full of clerks and documents, dealing with the so-called 'mailo' lands.

For the origin of these estates, we must go back a little way into the tangled history of the Baganda.

When Speke visited the Baganda court in the 'sixties—the first European to do so—he found a tight political organisation, whose shadow we know to-day, based on the Kabaka's absolute rule. The kingdom, then as now, was divided into sazas, and each saza chief was the Kabaka's servant, appointed by him and instantly dismissed, or probably beheaded (the Baganda had even devised a special weapon for decapitation) for the slightest disobedience or discourtesy.

The Kabaka of those days ruled with what we should consider cruel and wanton despotism—even Speke, a hardened traveller, was shocked when Mutesa, wishing to test a rifle which was one of Speke's presents, handed it to a boy 'and told him to shoot a man in the outer court, which was no sooner accomplished than the little urchin returned to announce his success with a look of glee such as we would see in the face of a boy who had robbed a birdsnest'. Freedom of speech was effectively curtailed by the king's habit of cutting out the lips and tongue of an offender.

Despotic as they were, the king's underlings did not themselves own

## UGANDA

land in any Western sense. Land belonged to families, and families belonged to clans. Kings and chiefs had unlimited rights over the people, but little or none over the disposal of land.

In 1877 the advance guard of C.M.S. missionaries reached Mutesa's court, to be followed two years later by the first party of White Fathers; and at about the same time, Moslem beliefs began to penetrate. After Mutesa's death in 1884, and the accession of his weak and vicious son Mwanga, Buganda's story is one of intrigue, struggle and warfare. First one party triumphed, then another; Mwanga burned to death 200 Christian martyrs, encompassed the murder of Bishop Hannington, was deposed by the Moslem faction, ostensibly repented and was restored by the Christians; again threatened by the Moslems, who burnt down his palace on Mengo hill, he appealed for help to the agents of the newly-formed Imperial British East Africa Company then tenuously occupying the country lying further east, and was answered by the arrival first of Jackson and Gedge and then, in 1890, of the young Captain Lugard. With Lugard, Mwanga made a treaty which placed on the Company the onus of maintaining law and order in a kingdom whose ancient stability was now altogether upset.

This responsibility soon proved too heavy for a half-bankrupt company to discharge. The war so long brewing between the Protestant and the Catholic parties among the Baganda—mere labels, in truth, tied to different factions struggling for power and office—broke out in earnest. Mwanga fled, and the Liberal Government in England, which was trying hard not to saddle itself with a new and distasteful commitment, reluctantly agreed to send its Consul-General in Zanzibar to look into the matter.

Meanwhile the Company's charter was running out, and the choice for the British Government lay between taking over responsibility for Uganda, and standing aside to see bloodshed, civil war and anarchy triumphant and the Christian Missions, after twelve years of courageous if explosive work, withdrawn, leaving their converts to be massacred. Faced with this alternative Sir Gerald Portal, on April 1st, 1893, ran up the Union Jack over the little fort built by Lugard at Kampala.

During the next seven years Buganda and its neighbouring kingdoms were brought slowly under control with small and subsequently mutinous forces, and in 1900 Sir Harry Johnston, sent out as Special Commissioner, negotiated the treaties that still stand as the bibles of Buganda, Toro and Ankole. Mistakes were made in these treaties, but by recognising and propping up the native governments already in existence, they rooted in East Africa the first working examples of

## 'MAILO' LANDS

indirect rule, at about the same time as it was being established in Northern Nigeria by Captain Lugard.

Mistakes were made: and the biggest one was to attribute to the feudal barons of Buganda rights over the land which they did not in fact possess. To every one of a thousand chiefs named by the Regents of Buganda,<sup>1</sup> Sir Harry Johnston gave the freehold of eight square miles, and to a few of the more senior office-holders he gave double this amount. The result is that out of a total area of about 16,600 square miles, slightly over 9,000 square miles are held on freehold by the descendants and relatives of chiefs. (About 3,700 persons established claims to freehold in the first instance.)

These 'mailo' lands, as they are called, can be bought and sold and divided up freely, and the enormous task of holding title deeds and registering every succession and sale falls to the Katikiro's land office. Many of the original grants have by now been broken down into small-holdings of five or ten acres; there are probably at least 20,000 separate mailo holdings in Buganda to-day. Others, on the other hand, have been built up into big estates.

The largest of these amounts to over 90 square miles, or more than 57,000 acres, and all rich agricultural land—a much larger slice of cultivable land than is possessed by any Kenya settler. And there are other estates almost as enormous. Such landowners employ, in some cases, several hundred immigrant labourers, while others let off their land to yearly tenants for 10/- a time, regardless of the size of the holding. This system, intended to protect the tenant, also exploits the land; for the landowner lets off plots so small that they must be flogged and squeezed to death in order to support a family.

However rich a man is in Buganda—and some landowners are very rich, with fine houses, motor cars, servants and incomes running into four figures—he pays no more in direct taxation than the poorest labourer. Uganda has an income tax, but only Europeans and Indians pay it; Africans are specifically exempted. This is racial discrimination with a vengeance—in favour of rich Africans. Their immunity is due to a clause in the famous Uganda Agreement. Any attempt to revise that now out-of-date treaty would excite the violent opposition of the Baganda. Nevertheless a graduated poll tax would not infringe the agreement.

<sup>1</sup>By then Mwanga had been deposed and his infant son Daudi Chwa was proclaimed king; three Regents, one of whom was Sir Apolo Kagwa, took over the Government until he came of age. Daudi Chwa died of drink in 1939, when the present Kabaka succeeded him at the age of fourteen.

## UGANDA

"Certainly the present system is unjust," said the Katikiro. "I have racked my brains to think of a better one. The trouble is, how can you assess a man's income unless he is a paid official? I have discussed it with all your experts—with the Governor, with Lord Hailey, only last year with Sir Wilfrid Woods, who was sent here from the British Treasury to investigate taxation. They cannot think of a way either. If anyone can, we shall be delighted."

Naturally, no Baganda would be so daft as to confess his true income to a tax official. Few know it accurately themselves. The wealth of the wealthy comes mainly from trading and from the sale of produce. No one keeps books. The problem really does seem insoluble. Meanwhile rich Baganda enjoy probably the lowest taxation in the world, while the British taxpayer, suffering under perhaps the heaviest, helps to pay the Buganda's school fees. During the next ten years he will contribute, through the Development and Welfare Fund, some £8,000,000 towards education, the improvement of health and other good works in the Protectorate.

In spite of a degree of fertility which almost shouts at you—vivid green everywhere, grass-stems as thick as pencils, ebullient vegetation, towering coffee trees and maize-plants; in spite of a 50-inch rainfall that never fails, in spite of a sun that warms the earth but never scorches it, in spite of every favour that nature could bestow, the soil of Buganda, though still fantastically rich, is slowly failing. In parts, of course, where it is properly cared for, its fertility is constant, but of Buganda as a whole the Agricultural Officer's verdict was:

"Yields are probably still declining faster than our propaganda is taking effect."

How far they have declined may be indicated by the history of cotton production. A peak of 400,500 bales for the whole Protectorate was reached and passed several years ago. In 1945 the yield was down to 300,000 bales and last year to 270,000—and yet the acreage has risen. Of course the whole of this decline is not due to loss of fertility—weather comes into it too—but the figures are a pointer, at least.

Yet to stabilise yields and then to raise them is not a complicated matter, and can be reduced to a simple formula. (Strip-cropping; mixed farming; grass leys.) The Baganda, who are nothing if not intelligent, are as capable as the next man of understanding and acting on it.

What, then, is the trouble? Human nature butting in once more. Cupidity in this case, and taking no heed for the morrow; the tempta-

## CRUMB STRUCTURE

tion to make a few extra shillings out of cotton, to get rent for a plot rather than grass it down.

"I'll see to it next year," no doubt many peasants think, in effect. "It won't hurt the land to wait another year. These Europeans always chivvy and fuss. We got on well enough before they came . . . and it's a lot of trouble and expense. My wife doesn't like it, either, she'll nag and grumble. And her father is pressing for that debt. So I'll plant cotton again this year, and perhaps next season . . ."

Some peasants have seen the light and are doing famously out of mixed farming. The stall-feeding of cattle has in places caught on so well that parties from other provinces are now brought on conducted tours to see how Buganda farmers manage. Now the whole programme is endangered by the advance from the north of *G. pallidipes*. All efforts to stop it, including late burning, have hitherto failed. The fly is still some way from Kampala, but until reliable methods of checking it emerge, all Buganda feels itself threatened.

Meanwhile only a few Baganda practise mixed farming; by and large, decline of soil fertility proceeds. As it does so, the soil's 'crumb structure' falls away.

It was here at Kawanda, the Uganda Government's experimental station for Buganda, that the soil chemist Dr. Martin carried out his now famous research demonstrating the importance of this crumb structure to the health of the soil.

Briefly, the theory is that soils in good heart have a high proportion of large crumbs which hold the moisture and enable a plant's rootlets to draw nourishment. As you overcrop the soil, those large crumbs break down into finer particles which do not absorb water or hold in suspension, to anything like the same extent, the plant foods. The worst result of a loss of crumb structure is that most of the rainfall, instead of soaking gently in, is repelled by the hard pan-like surface and runs to waste. Every year millions of tons of water thus pour away, performing as they go no useful purpose, in fact doing positive damage.

To measure crumb structure, Dr. Martin devised a simple test. You sieve your soil in water, and the proportion held back by a  $\frac{1}{2}$ -millimetre sieve gives a measure of crumb structure. This test is used all over the territories to assess the condition of soils.

It was Dr. Martin (now retired, but his successor carries on his work) who rubbed in the importance of grass not only as a way of resting land and getting cattle on to it, but as a direct improver of crumb-structure. The deep and multitudinous grass-roots themselves (leaving aside all manurial questions) have a remarkable building-up effect on

## UGANDA

a soil in a fine state of crumb-structure. Dr. Martin cleared the theoretical foundation for the doctrine now preached in season and out by agriculturists all over East Africa, and which may be summed up in the single admonition: plant grass. An answer to the next question—what grass?—is not yet so clear.

While cotton is still the prop and stay of the Protectorate, diversification is official policy. Here in Buganda, *robusta* coffee is coming up in importance. Buganda's coffee crop is now worth half as much as its cotton.

"This year," said the Agricultural Officer, "we hope to get a record crop of thirty thousand tons—three times more than the whole of Kenya's."

Indians buy the crop from the grower at a fixed price of 17 cents a pound of sun-dried cherry and sell it, again at a fixed price, to the curing mills. The Government handles contracts with overseas buyers and in the war made £1,000,000 out of coffee and over £4,000,000 out of cotton—sums which it has put into an Agricultural Development Fund for the good of the two industries, much to the annoyance of the growers, who would greatly prefer to have the money themselves.

*Robusta* seems a perfect crop for the lazy farmer. The trees need no pruning or special care, other than mulching; the cherry no preparation, other than leaving it out in the sun; the crop has no enemies, other than a single borer. It is a product ideally suited to the mild and enervating conditions of this warm, moist, lush, easy country, where fertility seems to well up from the very pores of the earth. Hard work, one feels here, would be a sort of aberration. The earth yields all that is expected of her like a fat cow whose heavy udders ooze with milk. Why, then, strain and pummel at the teats?

Samuel Baker records that when he first entered Bunyoro, he heard one of his sentries chanting over and over to himself: "Rain and potatoes, potatoes and rain—that's all it is, rain and potatoes, potatoes and rain. . . ." In Buganda he might have exclaimed: "Bananas and coffee, coffee and bananas . . ." at least that is what it looks like to-day. Coffee trees, glossy-leaved as laurels, rise to a great straggling height, many-stemmed; everywhere bananas, source of that *matoki* on which every Muganda lives from the time of weaning to the grave, and of that beer he so dearly loves to drink, spread their floppy leaves and hang down their heavy bunches.

From time to time, as you follow the winding paths, you see a red tower made by white ants and covered with a network of twigs; after

## BAGANDA FASHIONS

rain, when the winged ants rise in clouds from the ground, the Baganda throw sacking over the twigs to catch them, and cook them in fat. (That hospitality which is, even to-day, so general an African custom is nicely expressed in the proverb: 'A true friend shares even a white ant.'))

Our shiny new car bowled along smooth, narrow roads: gently undulating country this, interlaced with streams and small swampy valleys, but without views because of the height and density of vegetation. Our objective was the model farm of a Moslem cultivator who stall-feeds about 20 cows. Then, without any apparent reason, the car's body subsided noisily on to the back axle.

Nearby was a hut embedded in coffee and banana trees. A young wife of perhaps sixteen or seventeen years, wrapped in the gay cotton robe of the Baganda, emerged and, with a delightful manner, invited me in. Here it was dark, however, and the sunshine and the colour out-of-doors seemed preferable; so, with an unprompted courtesy, she placed a chair for me by the roadside and went about her household duties, walking with the poise and grace of a queen.

Such gentle and urbane civility could be looked for in few parts of eastern Africa, and even among Baganda males, whose reputation for politeness, in the past, was equal to that for duplicity, it is said to be growing daily more rare.

Polite or not, the women of Buganda are for the most part magnificent. In Kampala they ride the streets in gorgeous purples and magentas, golds and puce and verdurous greens, like oriental galleons crowded with sail of silk and satin, the rich materials draped over their dark glossy shoulders and full bosoms to sweep the ground under their bare feet, a wide sash wrapped round their middles and tied in a bow over their behinds like incipient bustles. Their backs are straight as palm-trees, their heads are high and they walk with the pride of an empress: often puffing, as they go, at a clay pipe with a long slender stem. The men in their white robes, or their clean drill suits and gleaming topees, are a foil for the women's garish, Moresque colouring.

Men are to be found in rags here, as in most places—though the rags, being clean, seldom look squalid—but by and large you could not see such a gaily dressed and well-fed collection of people to-day in any European city.

Here in the country dress is simpler, for it is still the woman's duty to cultivate the food crops unless her husband is wealthy. With cotton and coffee prices now so high, more and more of the Baganda do in fact employ paid labour, and dotted about among the bananas are the crude round huts of the Banyaruanda squatters. They work, as a rule,



## UGANDA

for two masters, for half a day each. The first pays their wages but no food, the second gives them food but no wages. On Indian estates they get food and wages and shorter hours, but many seem to prefer a system where life is less regimented and the food more varied. Wages are low, perhaps ten or twelve shillings monthly, but with the scarcity of labour the rates are tending to rise. The Baganda employer does not have to house his workmen, as the European does, nor do any of the usual Government regulations and inspections seem to apply.

"We could double our output if we had the labour," remarked the Agricultural Officer; and an African landowner added, with a sad shake of the head:

"The natives are so lazy! They saunter about doing nothing most of the day. As for wages—they are not worth what they are paid."

The Katikiro had said: "We shall not prosper until everyone works much harder. I say that if people won't work they must be made to. But we must start with feeding. Until the diet is better, we cannot expect a full day's work."

It all sounded familiar. White skins or black: it matters little in the world of economics, where facts stand like rocks under the shifting tides of prejudice and emotion. The Kenya settler and the Baganda landowner are brothers under the skin.

The broken car defeated its owner, and we never got to see the model farmer. I drove back to Kampala in a lorry belonging to the Empire Cotton Growing Corporation, which is setting up about 17 miles from the capital a new research station to be a centre for all Africa. The cost, some £250,000, is to come from the British Treasury. Although research after better varieties of cotton will greatly benefit and enrich the Baganda, the beneficiaries do not want to give up the land. The Government has offered compensation at the rate of nearly £20 an acre, although the market price thereabouts is 30/-.

"It was a bribe to the Baganda after the riots," said this cotton man disgustedly. "They'd have accepted a fair price in the end if the Government had stuck to its guns. Instead—twenty-five thousand pounds for 'compensation' to people who'll be the first to benefit! Might as well compensate me for putting up my pay! Appeasement—that's the way the home taxpayer's money goes in Uganda. Political bribery!"

The Director of Public Relations and Social Welfare said: "I've asked some leading members of the intelligentsia to tea"—a chilling remark, but in the event the guests so formidably designated proved less formidable than their designation suggested. This was perhaps

## TEA WITH THE INTELLIGENTSIA

because members of an African intelligentsia talk politics, a subject which, if not always so stimulating, is less erudite than topics more generally pursued by highbrows elsewhere. At least nothing so intimidating occurred as on a past occasion when, arriving to tea with a hitherto unknown member of the New York intelligentsia-plutocracy, and after passing along a sort of living chain of retainers, I was greeted with the eager exclamation: "Ah! Now you can tell me *all* about Etruscan tombs!"

This section of Uganda's intelligentsia entered the house in pairs like Noah's animals, except that all were males: two editors, two teachers, two Government clerks, two 'business men', and so on. And all were, I think, Baganda, or at any rate they talked of conditions in Buganda or Bunyoro. (Their arguments would apply with less force to regions where the hands of the Government are not tied by treaties.)

"The whole structure of native administration imposes a barrier of slowness and inefficiency between the people and the Government," said Mr. E. M. K. Mulira, a teacher who has published a number of plays, a volume of verse and a book called *Thoughts of a Young African*. "We feel that progress would be quicker if Government were much more direct."

"But you would scarcely wish the Government to rule except through the people. . . ."

"The point is that the native government does not represent *progressive* people. And there is too much bureaucracy on Mengo hill. Things get to the Council and go round and round. . . ."

That, of course, is the old way of Africa—days, weeks, months of discussion; one morning breaks like the next, to-morrow is another day. These young Africans have been trained to go by the clock; and, knowing their education in Western ways to be superior to that of many hereditary chiefs, feel shut out and slighted. They are, as it were, intellectual Uitlanders in a patriarchal farmer's state.

"Chiefs are out of date. They feather their own nests. Government would work quicker *direct*, and do better for the people."

A stock answer to this stock complaint is that it is up to the younger, educated men to reform the system from within by entering the native administration and using their talents to help on their own people. This suggestion was treated with derision.

"Imagine one of *us* becoming a gombolola chief!" They laughed scornfully, and explained: "It would be a step backwards, both in pay and in status. Salaries of gombolola chiefs vary between thirty-five and a hundred and thirty pounds a year—say an average of forty or

## UGANDA

fifty pounds. All of us earn more than that, and have better prospects. And a chief is only the servant of the *saza*, and then of the Kabaka. He may find himself in some out-of-the-way country district miles from civilised neighbours. You could not expect any of us to think of that!"

"It all comes down to money," said the teacher-poet. "Native Governments do not pay enough to attract the best brains."

Traces of the contempt felt by this new aristocracy of civil servants and teachers and traders for country-cousins of an older and outmoded Africa flavoured their conversation.

"If you can't enter local government, how about representing the people as an elected member?"

"The rule which prevents a Government employee from standing for election," they said, "eliminates most educated men."

Their solution is to transfer much more direct control back to the central Government and its paid officials, and to open all higher posts immediately to Africans. Official policy is of course just the opposite: to offload more and more control on to 'the people', organised in locally elected and responsible bodies. You might say that the intelligentsia wants to have African D.C.s and the Government looks forward to abolishing D.C.s altogether. The intelligentsia, of course, would supply the D.C.s. The Government, as it rightly or wrongly believes, is looking to the slow growth of a spirit of self-help and responsibility among the great bulk of the people, who might not at all appreciate intelligentsia D.C.s.

"And another thing," said one of the editors. "We object to three Katikiros representing 'native interests' on Legislative Council. They do *not* represent anyone. They have no way at all of finding out the views of the people."

The feeling of this group was, certainly and strongly, anti-native Government, anti-Katikiro—and probably anti-Kabaka, although the open expression of such a view would be seditious. They did not appear to be unduly anti-European as yet. This may have been due partly to good manners and partly to a belief that, when the time comes, a small group of Europeans at the centre would be much easier to get rid of than a wide-flung network of native *functionaires* at the periphery. They, like all young, ambitious men, lust after power.

The editors of the two leading newspapers, both Luganda weeklies, were present at this party. The largest, *Matalisi*, is owned by the *Uganda Herald*, which is in turn owned by one of the oldest and most renowned citizens of Kampala, Mr. Michael Moses, who came from Persia to seek his fortune so long ago that he can remember and vividly

## NEWSPAPER EDITORS

describe incidents in the Sudanese mutiny of 1897. The other, *Ramogi*, belongs to Baganda capitalists. *Matalisi* claims a circulation of 8,000, and no doubt every copy gets passed many times from hand to hand. "I am getting four or five hundred letters a week," said the editor, "on topics of the hour."

"And these are——?"

"First, the pros and cons of constructing an island in the road leading to the Palace. Second, Paper 210. We are sternly opposed to these proposals. We fear that the Kenya settlers will succeed in their demands for self-government and then reach out to dominate us."

"But that has nothing to do with Paper 210. . . ."

"Nevertheless we do not want any closer links of any kind with our neighbours. We want to stay as we are."

Like Kenya settlers and Tanganyika Indians, very few among them have actually read Paper 210, but they all know what they think about it. 'Hands off Uganda' is the prevalent spirit, and they mean to keep their own hands off any kind of machinery for co-operation between the three countries. Yet Uganda, whose only outlets to the world lie through other countries, must co-operate in order to survive, and has in fact always done so without a great deal of friction.

The attitude of all races towards Kenya seems acrimonious rather than reasoned. Africans fear some unspecified and mysterious *coup* by Kenya settlers; Indians—wealthy and well-entrenched—do not wish to get themselves mixed up in their compatriots' troubles; Europeans evince a curious mixture of superiority and jealousy. This makes them very upstage. The Uganda Government is looking for a house in Nairobi to hold its entire delegation to the inter-territorial assembly—"so that we do not have to mix more than we must with other delegates," I was told by a high official. "We shall act as a team, vote as a team and live as a team"—withdrawing the hem of his garment from Nairobi's contamination.<sup>1</sup>

There is no end to politics; our tea-party might have gone on all night. The fluency of these young men in a foreign tongue is remarkable, and makes one wonder whether English may not one day become the common language, leaving vernaculars to shrivel into dialects as Welsh and Erse and Gaelic shrivelled until an irrelevant nationalism rescued them. Since Luganda has no word for ecstasy. . . .

<sup>1</sup>On January 1st, 1948, the proposals outlined in Paper 210 for co-ordinating certain services common to the three territories, including transport, came into effect. A High Commission was set up consisting of the three Governors, plus a Central Legislative Assembly on which the three countries have equal representation, and an inter-territorial Secretariat.

## UGANDA

These voluble and quick-witted individuals are the intelligentsia's cream. The streets of Kampala are clogged with a sort of curdled milk, brash young men who are literate but ignorant, Westernised in shell and empty of kernel. These are the men who weave political fantasies, who intrigue and agitate; who bridge the sad gulf between dreams and reality with secret societies and Nubian gin.

These are the men among whom rumour flourishes: deliberately malicious rumours that the Buganda ministers have pocketed a present of 100/- a head given to all Baganda by the British Prime Minister, and bizarre stories that the Government has ordered the sterilisation of all owners of pigs. A world of women who are prostitutes and men who are ready to believe a pedlar of charms that if they put a stone under their pillow they will wake up to find it turned into five shillings; and do so, and find that it has; and pay the magician 10/- for a spell to turn another stone into a hundred shillings.

A world at once bustling and langorous, easy-going and suspicious, credulous and scheming, peopled by men with dreams too vague to follow and too glorious to renounce: a world unsatisfied, unstable, amoral, pleasure-seeking, intolerant, inflammable as a hayloft—in fact, a very caricature of our own. A world made for the demagogue, and one where demagogues are seldom wanting; a world of which an ageing missionary recently said: "For forty-five years I have watched the steady material gain of the people and their progressive moral deterioration."

A show-piece of Kampala is Mulago Government Hospital, impressive if only by reason of its size. There are beds for over 1,000 patients, and out-patients are treated daily in droves. Specialist schools have been set up for optics, orthopædic cases, gynæcology and (largest of all) venereal diseases. And no African pays a penny for his treatment.

Mulago has a new Scots Superintendent who is refreshingly frank, and who regards his task as that of cleaning out an Augean stable. For, good as the medical work has always been, discipline (it seems) has evaporated.

"All Europeans, including the Sisters, have gone home at half-past four," Colonel Bell explained. "From then until eight next morning there has been no European in the hospital. It's sad but true that abuse of trust and immorality have resulted. African doctors, good as many are at their work, have not learnt—with a few exceptions—to put the patient's interests before their own. Some have made money by practising on the side and neglected the free patients in the hospital."

## MULAGO HOSPITAL

The Superintendent pointed out a low fence topped by a couple of slack and looped strands of barbed wire.

"That's the fence that separates, or is supposed to separate, the women probationers from the male medical orderlies. You can imagine what goes on after four-thirty! As a matter of fact," he added, "you can't stop that sort of thing with locks and fences. The only way is to build up a public opinion about it, a sort of Mulago spirit. We shall try. . . ."

I watched a lecture on anatomy being delivered through an interpreter by an English Sister-tutor to the neat young probationers. As none of the technical words has a Luganda equivalent, this must present difficulties—not only ecstasy but metatarsal defies translation. The girls' lack of English is their gravest handicap. They are taken from the sixth standard—that is to say, from the academic level reached in England, roughly, by children of eleven or twelve.

"They're quick and intelligent," said the Sister-tutor, "but they prefer the lectures to the ward work, and many seem to lack the stamina to stick to routine. But they're naturally clean and often make excellent midwives."

Here, also, come Makerere students for training: two years' anatomy and physiology to begin with, then three years in the wards.

"I find them no less intelligent and receptive than students at home," said their Dean, newly out from Scotland. "Language is the main difficulty—their English holds them back." It costs about £2,000, he added, to train each Makerere doctor. At present there are 37 at the hospital.

All the resident staff is African. It is impressive to watch these Makerere trained men working through the long waiting rows of out-patients.

"At home, three-quarters of these people would treat themselves," said an English doctor. "For a long time European medicine was suspect in Africa. Now it's swung over to the opposite extreme and people come in for a slight cough or a sore finger, and the women flock in to have their babies. Malaria, V.D. and worms are the usual troubles. And no sooner do they go out than most of them get reinfected. . . ."

If a sick man distrusts Mulago he has only to walk across the way to Namirembe where, near the big Anglican cathedral, the C.M.S. hospital stands. Although he must pay here according to his means, many prefer to do so (I was told—and by a Government doctor) rather than accept the free but sometimes brusque treatment at Mulago.

## UGANDA

On Namirembe hill the Governor laid the foundation stone of a new wing. A gay audience assembled: British officials and African rulers, prelates and Katikiros, Indian merchants and English business men, the wives all in printed silks or spangled *saris*. Above the lawn, ranks of African nurses and probationers in snowy uniforms and scarlet cloaks splashed a streak of colour across the scene. A band played, the sun shone, the air sparkled; to the strains of the national anthem the dignitaries approached; cameras whirled, the spruce and energetic Governor in military uniform spoke in ringing tones, and Sir Albert Cook, leaning on the arm of his daughter—a man in his seventy-eighth year—came out to speak into the microphone.

Fifty years ago to the day, the then young medical missionary opened on this same site Uganda's first hospital, two huts with walls of reed and floors of mud. "Our first operation," he records,<sup>1</sup> "was carried out on a camp bedstead, the instruments being sterilised in a saucepan and laid in vegetable dishes. . . . The bottles for stock mixtures were the empty bottles in which the Communion wine had come. The currency was in cowrie shells, two hundred going to the rupee." Dr. Cook's only helper and companion was a nursing Sister, and in due course she became his wife.

For fifty years the doors of the hospital have never closed, and the sick have passed through them from all over Uganda and beyond. It is on record that a blind Arab once journeyed here from Berbera, in Somaliland, and had his sight restored.

Now the well-equipped hospital that Sir Albert Cook and his wife created from two rough mud huts is appealing for £30,000 to add a new wing. Indians are responding generously, and so are Europeans; in his speech the Governor said frankly that less than £1 in every £100 hitherto subscribed had come from Africans, whose needs the new wing will serve, and whose sick had been treated here without stint since the beginning.

Tea on the lawn after the ceremony wore a garden-party air; ices were served at small tables, a breeze ruffled the leaves, a military band played, and the rank and fashion of Uganda, white and black and brown, exchanged smiles and greetings. There sat Sir Albert Cook, grey and bent, a great doctor in his day, who can remember Mengo hill when the reed palace of the last of the independent savage kings sprawled across it; and from the windows the patients, treated no longer with Epsom salts but with Paludrine and penicillin, looked down upon the jaunty scene.

<sup>1</sup>*Uganda Memories*, by Sir Albert R. Cook. The Uganda Society, Kampala, 1945.

## A SHELTERED GARDEN CITY

### ENTEBBE

This, the seat of Government, is a miniature garden city on the margin of an inland sea. All is green as a water-meadow, trees and shrubs glow with bright flowers, wooded bluffs rise above the shore as if for the very purpose of affording a view over the lake. By night fat hippos browse beside the reedy edges, by day birds flash their plumage in the trees. There is a sort of dream-like quality about Entebbe, perhaps because the vulgar shouts of the market-place do not reach here, there is no industry, no commerce, no slums.

Senior officials with their wives and retainers are almost the sole inhabitants; for the common business of life, whether it is to shop or to meet a train, to go to the pictures or attend meetings of Legislative Council, they drive 30 miles along a tarmac road to Kampala. Here in Entebbe they formulate policy, write minutes, play golf and drink sundowners. The air is soft and warm and, one would guess, a little stifling. An old-world devotion to protocol lingers on. Not long ago a new official joined one of the Government departments. Having occasion to write to a colleague of senior rank in another department, he signed the letter 'yours sincerely'. The director of his colleague's department rang up the director of his own and, after suitable preamble, suggested that the newcomer should be properly instructed. The correct formula was: 'I have the honour to remain, Sir, your humble, obedient servant,' and short cuts were not approved.

This took place at the time of the D-Day landings in Normandy. Entebbe seems a long way from Europe, and an ingrowing outlook is not the prerogative of officials. An African student, describing how word of the invasion of Europe spread through Kampala, concluded: "This news was received with tense excitement and breathless interest throughout Uganda and no doubt in other parts of the Empire. People began to anticipate an immediate fall in the price of sugar."

Trim and civilised as Entebbe seems, it is strange to recall that within twenty miles or so of its tree-lined avenues and delightful arboretum an entomologist was stabbed to death because he drove out in a red car and was therefore thought to be a cannibal: the red car being linked in the minds of the local people with a brand of canned food bearing on the label the picture of a red hand, presumed to depict the can's contents. Old and new are not yet fully blended.

About three miles out, down on the Lake's edge, is the site of Entebbe village, where raiders from the islands once beached their canoes and where the first Christian missionaries so fatefully landed. To-day the



## UGANDA

veterinary laboratories occupy it; and here a member of the 'insecticide team' handed me a mud brick, saying:

"That is impregnated with DDT. It's the result of our researches on emulsions. It kills all mosquitoes within fifteen seconds of their contact with the walls. The incidence of malarial infection in the blood of children fell by half after one application."

These researchers are working towards the possibility that by the regular spraying of all African houses in a township or village, mosquitoes could be so reduced that malaria would almost vanish. What this would mean in greater fitness no one could calculate. No child in this part of Africa reaches maturity without frequent and debilitating attacks of the fever.

And then there is the tsetse fly. Such high claims have been made for the two new chemicals, DDT. and gammexane, that people have naturally asked whether they cannot be enlisted, in the nick of time, to save the situation. This is the question that scientists at Entebbe, working in close touch with colleagues in South Africa, have to decide. Caution is as natural to a scientist as quills to a porcupine, but, behind the mask, optimism seems to glimmer.

Men may be able, for example, to coat the vegetation with DDT. so thoroughly as to kill the tsetse flies. They are testing sprays on islands in the Lake, and they have reduced the tsetse count by 98 per cent by means of four applications at intervals of ten days.

An even more promising line is to coat the vegetation with the chemical by means of smoke. Using a generator adapted from the Navy's war-time device and mounted on trucks and jeeps, they have laid a DDT. smoke-screen which seems to have almost wiped out the tsetse over big blocks of bush. In South Africa, smoke screens laid from aircraft have won the same effect.

"It is too early yet for definite results," they say at Entebbe. Meanwhile, the fly creeps forward steadily. . . .

The two-hour flight from Entebbe to Kisumu is all over water, save where you see below one of many small, green, jewel-like islands, and feel the wings tip a little as your aircraft meets a stream of warmer air rising gently from their broken surfaces. Below stretches the blue water, crinkled faintly like a cooling jelly by the breeze and streaked lightly by the wake of fishermen's canoes. The papyrus is green as a young apple, the water peacock-blue, the sky sun-flooded, clear as glass. Somewhere over the water you cross the territorial boundary, and soon after you see below the round homesteads and winding paths and crowded shambas of Kavirondo, east of the Lake.

## *Part Six*

# KENYA

### KISUMU

What you notice first about Kenya is, I think, a change of tempo. Not in Kisumu's hot sunny street full of loungers or in its thronged municipal market or in the Indian dukas, but in the hotel full of airways passengers coming or going and in the Government offices, where the telephone seems always ringing and commissions or experts or politicians or just visitors seem always to be arriving from Nairobi or from London. The files which get pushed aside under the stress of all this activity detain their masters at week-ends and into the night. No quiet life at Kisumu, hot and steamy as it is—a tin-roofed town on the margin of the shallow Kavirondo Gulf where graceful B.O.A.C. flying-boats swoop in like giant geese from the north.

Over a cup of tea I met the first African from Kavirondo to be made a Legislative Councillor, Mr. Apolo Ohanga. Soon he will join Mr. Eliud Mathu as a representative of native interests. As secretary of the Luo Language Committee Mr. Ohanga, a typical man of his tribe—tall, well-built and black—visited Acholi in Uganda a little while ago to meet a similar committee there.

"The Luo and the Acholi were once the same people," he said, "but we have been split for several hundred years and our speech has grown apart. Now neither side wishes to give way."

In Legislative Council Mr. Ohanga will speak for about one and a half million people. One senses in these parts a certain feeling of reserve towards African political leaders and movements centred in Nairobi, where Kikuyu influence predominates. Things Kikuyu are not popular here. In South Kavirondo, Kikuyu settlers have come in unasked to squat in the hills, slowly infiltrating until about 30,000 have dug themselves in. No one would have objected had not the Kikuyu refused to recognise the Local Native Council and demanded a council of their own, and separate schools. All this has naturally strengthened the suspicion that Kikuyu politicians are out for Colony-wide domination.

Mr. Ohanga is a 'moderate', believing in the possibility of co-operation and friendship between the races. But extremists have all

## KENYA

the best tunes. At a meeting in Nairobi he made a strong appeal for racial accommodation; then a Kikuyu leader rose and said: "I agree with all that Mr. Ohanga has told you, but I would like to add this: when you see the cat and the mouse playing together, you may think—how nice to see such friendship and co-operation! But remember what happens in the end to the mouse!"

"I know," said Mr. Ohanga, "that we shall need European help for a long time to come in my country." Yet he repeated with a certain relish a retort of Eliud Mathu's, who, when asked: "What would you do if the Europeans went? Wouldn't there be mere chaos?" replied: "We should revert to more human standards!"

To-day educated men of Mr. Ohanga's stamp are finding an outlet as executive officers of Local Native Councils, Kenya's less traditional and more democratic version of the Native Authorities. Each of the three councils in Kavirondo now disposes of revenues of round about £50,000 a year, spending the money first on education—they would spend it all on this if they could—and then on such necessities as salaries, police, roads and bridges, soil improvement schemes, tree-planting and many other things. (In Kenya the chiefs are paid direct by the Government.) Of the Central Kavirondo L.N.C.'s 48 members, 32 are elected by the people, 15 are nominated by the Government and one represents Kisumu township.

"We need more schools," said Mr. Joel Amino, the secretary, adding his voice to a cry resounding from coast to lake. "In Central Kavirondo we have two hundred and twenty-eight elementary schools and only sixty-three of these can be helped by the L.N.C. The rest must be paid for by parents' fees." These vary from 1/6 a term in lower grades to 12/- a term in the highest standards.

The L.N.C. wants to increase their annual cess of 1/- a head levied for education over and above their 4/- rate, but the Government has to hold them back because of lack of teachers. If a thousand schools went up to-morrow they would remain unstaffed. All the time the need presses harder as babies tumble from the African cornucopia. Half the population of Kavirondo consists of children and infants, it is thought.

The educational hub of the province is at Maseno, the big C.M.S. centre in the hills about 20 miles north of Kisumu, built up over a quarter of a century by the late Archdeacon Owen. Here is a boys' school, a training centre for teachers and a veterinary station; here also are bold plans for a cultural and welfare centre to serve the whole of this part of the densely packed Lake Province.

## DARA

There are plans to enlarge the school and provide a full secondary education, to build a new social centre with information room and library and lecture-hall, to expand the L.N.C. seed-farm into an agricultural station. The veterinary centre is resplendent already with new cowsheds and dairy where experts teach hygienic ghee-making and give three-year courses in animal husbandry. A new bungalow is already occupied by a young entomologist in charge of the clearing of tsetse-infested bush from the lake shore.

The money for all this activity is coming from a body called DARA—the Development and Reconstruction Authority—which has a ten year plan and £15,000,000 to spend on it. DARA itself consists of three men: the Chief Secretary, the General Manager of the Railway and the leader of the European elected members. Its plan is a boiled-down, hammered-out amalgam of all the development plans of all the various departments, reduced at last to something manageable, with first things put first. A shortage of everything from nails to geologists hampers progress, but as and when men and materials can be collected the schemes are getting under way.

DARA's first priority is to save the soil and to reform methods of farming. While the ends are beyond dispute, the means are still in doubt. There seem to be two schools of thought, roughly speaking, with some hybridisation. On the one hand is the school that believes in some form or other of collective farming: large units, mechanisation, close supervision. This you might call the Worthington-Maher School, and you may see an imperfect application of its ideas at Makueni. At the other extreme stand believers in enlightened peasantry, and their doctrine may be seen in action at Bukura, in North Kavirondo, where the Agricultural department shows how peasants with peasant resources may work the land with benefit to its fertility and advantage to themselves. Bukura is a dream of what all Kavirondo, indeed much of eastern Africa, might become, were scientific knowledge to direct African labour, and the lust for quick profits to be held in check.

At the Bukura Agricultural Training Centre, to use its full title, future African instructors, together with selected peasants and teachers (some 60 in all) receive a two-years' course in how to run efficient small-holdings.

We came first upon some young men building a house of home-burnt bricks. Three rondavels linked by a veranda—brick walls, brick floor, timber window-frames and doors, thatched roof—can be put up for £60, but these students do it for nothing, save for the cost

## KENYA

of a few nails and a little cement. The result is a dwelling clean, healthy and permanent, and a practical training in rough carpentry and brick-making. Four young men are to share this house and work as a team on a small-holding of six acres.

A long slope fell away from the house to one of the little rivers that intersect these rolling, shamba-clustered green ridges. It is from these innumerable slopes that the savage thunderstorms of this lakeland region wrench and tear the naked soil, leaving a surface scarred and gulleys, as we had seen merely by looking to right and left of the road.

"Of these six acres," said the Agricultural Officer in charge, "three are strip-cropped, three under grass. Every year we plough one-third of the pasture and plant one-third of the arable with star or Kikuyu grass." So good do these pastures become that they will carry two beasts to the acre where the usual rate on native shambas is one to five acres. In other words, Bukura methods raise the carrying capacity by ten.

This is immensely significant in a region where farming is so unbalanced that scarcely anyone has enough meat or milk, and no land enough manure. Although in parts there is on average only one beast to a family, over-stocking is bad. Yet no family dares grass down its cultivation lest it could not then grow enough grain to feed itself. Cattle for the most part are tethered, picking a living off odd banks and corners. Bukura shows the people a way out.

"We reckon," said Mr. Bradford, "that on one of our six-acre plots a man and his family can keep themselves on a decent diet—which most of them aren't getting now—and make a cash income over and above their food of about twenty pounds a year."

Yet the average family in this district sells off only about 50/- worth of produce a year from a plot a good deal larger than these Bukura small-holdings, and so is forced to seek cash by other means. About 50,000 men are normally away from their homes at work.

"You can put it this way," I was told. "North Kavirondo is showing all the signs of increasing overpopulation—yields dropping, fragmentation of land, poverty, malnutrition. It can't support its present numbers, let alone future ones—the population seems certain to double in the next twenty-five years. Yet the acreage per family over the whole region averages about fourteen. If the population could be redistributed and everyone practised good farming, then we believe that the *present* population could support itself at a decent standard of living. Admittedly we should have no margin over for the natural increase,

## THE BUKURA IDEA

but we should have a breathing space to make plans. The point is that the land *could* still support its population. It *could* still be saved. But time is getting very short. . . ."

It is a rule here that students are taught nothing they cannot go out and do for themselves. Ploughs are used, but no tractors. The hand-hoe and the *panga* are still wielded. There is no magic about it. All you need to do is to follow a few simple practices which everyone is burning to explain and demonstrate.

"Our newest experiment is in *co-operative* farming," said Mr. Bradford, leaving unspoken an implicit dislike of the collective idea. "Six families run their land together. They plant and harvest together and pool their labour, but each retains its own share of the crop. You could run a whole valley that way, on contour strips running right through, with everyone ploughing, planting and harvesting at the same time. That's how the whole of North Kavirondo could be run, with the elders meeting to decide when to carry out each operation and to settle disputes."

Bukura has a vision and an idea. The only mystery about it is, why every African who has seen the results—and a great many have, for parties are continually being taken round—does not hurry home to put it all into practice on his own shamba.

I do not think the agriculturists themselves fully understand the reasons for their failure to get their teaching across. Apathy, suspicion, indolence, lack of leadership, insecure tenure of land—no doubt all these enter in. A clue comes from Mr. Bradford, who has pointed out that the figures for output from a six-acre small-holding are based on an eight-hour working day, whereas "improvidence, *laissez faire* and indolence, combined with the general peasant tendency to enjoy life to the full and visit every burial, beer drink and market, reduce the average working day to five hours."<sup>1</sup> In other words people would have to work much harder in order to farm better, and this they have not hitherto been willing to do.

As one of Kenya's ablest Agricultural Officers put it: behind the reasons given by Africans themselves "one can generally detect the underlying belief that this is an alien system which does not fit in at all with the social life of the people."<sup>2</sup>

This officer came recently to Kavirondo to inquire into this very point, how to persuade the peasantry to practise the lessons of Bukura. The picture he draws is a sad one of a land of plenty growing thinner,

<sup>1</sup>The East African Agricultural Journal, October, 1946.

<sup>2</sup>The Liguru and the Land, by Norman Humphrey, Kenya Government report, 1947.

## KENYA

the people less well-fed, their social organisation crumbling. Once some of these tribes—there are twenty in North Kavirondo alone—lived in walled villages, the people cultivated and worked together and soil fertility was partially safeguarded by gentlemen called the *liguru*, hereditary heads of family groups who, though not exactly chiefs, had an important say in anything to do with the land.

What has happened to the *liguru*? They have retreated before the money-making urge which has destroyed as well the old crop rotations, and led to the planting of maize, maize, maize. This is the easiest of all money-makers, and, against their own judgment, the Government has had to encourage its cultivation for the production drive. Now there is no authority able to persuade the people to halt before they reach disaster. It is true that the L.N.C.s have powers, and do in fact pass worthy resolutions; but the people do not follow their new leaders as they did the old.

Mr. Norman Humphrey's suggestion is to revive, recognise and strengthen the *liguru*: to reinstate them as land authorities, and see that they clearly know what must be done. Is this feasible? Is it not putting back the clock? Mr. Humphrey says 'no'; that people still respect these hereditary leaders, that in some cases they function even now, though with diminished vigour.

Others fear that dissolution has gone too far. They believe that young men are in no mood to respect their elders; that they will go on until they have squeezed the last bag of white maize out of the last acre of fertile soil, and then demand from the Government food and fresh land elsewhere. They point to what has happened in Maragoli, where contour banks have been deliberately destroyed, partly at the instigation of local politicians, partly because land pressure is so fierce that not even a grassed bank can be spared from the hoe.

So here is Bukura, showing the way; there are the people, blinkered by suspicion, haltered by apathy and indolence, refusing to follow it; there is disaster at their heels. It is not ignorance that fetters them; the old *liguru* did better, though their system was imperfect, than the new half-educated men. They have been told, but they do not believe; or if they believe, they will not act. There is something missing. It is as if you had an aeroplane all ready to take off, of excellent design, complete in every part save one, the spark that will set the engine throbbing. That is what is missing. That is what must be found if all these good intentions are not to pave a new road to hell.

At Butere market, two or three thousand people must have crowded on to a green space before a crescent of neat brick market stalls. In a

## BUTTERE MARKET

row of trim new shops we talked to ex-soldiers installed as retailers or as tailors at treadle machines, all lamenting the shortage of goods. Customers clustered thickly round clean cemented butchers' shops and round less-clean cafés where tea, thickly sugared, is ever popular. The ordinary peasant and his wife do not rent stalls but squat down on the grass and proffer their load of millet or beans or rice, their twist of tobacco, their bag of eggs or tin of ghee, their hand of bananas or handful of chilies or basket of onions, their black lumps of crystallised salt from the burnt roots of papyrus.

You cannot believe there is scarcity. As you push your way in the bright sunshine through the tightly packed, jostling, laughing, shouting crowd of sturdy, vigorous men and upright, glossy-skinned women (as often as not puffing at long clay pipes), you must observe these folk to be healthy and well fed and self-confident, and see with your own eyes the fruits of a rich earth offered in great profusion. Confronted with such abundance you may perhaps dismiss as jeremiads all that the Agricultural Officers have just been telling you.

Yet in another part of the market you may watch the soil fertility checked in at a weighing station, graded and bagged and paid for and then sent off in lorries—the whole process efficiently handled by African clerks—and all disguised as maize. You will not see any sign of its return.

If you pour out a jug of coffee, the last drop will be as strong as the first; and if you watch the spout only, you cannot tell when you are near the end. Only by looking into the jug can you tell this. Butere market is like a spout, and out of it the produce gushes; but the Agricultural Officers have looked inside. There is still time, they say—but not much. We are near the bottom of the jug.

## KAKAMEGA

Kakamega hums with activity. It is a lovely station, 6,000 feet up, its 60 to 70-inch rainfall keeping it always fresh and green. The gardens of the bungalows look out over tumbling ridges towards the forested hills of the Nandi escarpment, and down over fertile plains towards the Lake.

Reinforcements of staff are coming in at last to relieve the hard-pressed fort-holders. There are four new cadets. One was a Brigadier at 32, another a Wing-Commander test pilot; in uniform, their chests sparkle with ribbons, most of which seem to register a double. All this is a little unnerving for the civilian D.C. who must instruct these young men in the elements of administration.



## KENYA

One of the five newly-appointed African District Officers (officially, 'Administrative Assistants') is also posted to Kakamega: Mr. Musa Lusiola, a native of these parts, with a secondary education but no Makerere training.

"In the office he's treated exactly the same as the Colonial Service cadets," said the D.C. "He gets all the files and circulars (poor devil), deals with interviews and goes on safari. In some ways he has a pull over the others—for instance, the language. So far, in this district anyway, the experiment's a success."

He is not treated the same as regards pay. His salary is £11 a month, that of a British cadet about £50. No equal pay for equal work; but to concede the same scale would be to pay a sum at present out of all proportion to the salaries of other Africans doing work no less responsible. In fairness, all would have to rise; and the Colony would immediately find itself saddled with vastly higher costs. These could be met only by further taxes wrung mainly from peasants. (Soaking the rich is no solution; they are too few, and some of them elude the soaker.) This is an occasion where justice to the few would mean injustice to the many. Yet the sum seems inadequate to the situation. The dilemma is one likely to grow more pressing.

Mr. Lusiola arranged for me an informal meeting with the local English-speaking intelligentsia: masters from the Government school, dressers from the hospital, clerks from the L.N.C. and Government offices. Such meetings always resolve themselves into recitals of political grievances. This matter of equal pay for equal work came up, as one would have expected; the need for more land, too, and more education. 'Give the land back to the Africans'; 'We have no capital to farm like Europeans; the Government should give it to us.' 'Why are there not many more bursaries for English universities?' 'Why are there not African officers in the K.A.R.?' 'We want pensions. Then we should not need to buy shambas in the reserves.'

To the query: "Where is the money to come from for all these reforms?" there is only one answer, given as a rule with a smile and a shrug of the shoulders:

"Europeans are rich. They should pay."

Some of the questions I found hard to answer. A tall young teacher said, in his rather halting, serious English: .

"Madam, you are a lady. You write books. Why cannot our African ladies write books?"

I was reminded of an African in Nairobi who had said:

"I have written three novels. I have sent them to an English



Locusts : Kavirondo Province  
Ploughing in the Highlands



CHIEF IGNATIO—new style



CHIEF KARETHIII—old style



## SELF-HELP

publisher. Why does he not publish them?" To write good books in a foreign tongue, I reminded him, was so hard that only a handful of men had ever achieved it. This puzzled and surprised him: clearly it had not occurred to his mind that the merits of his books might have been at fault; mere racial prejudice, in his view, was the cause of their rejection.

One must be struck by the dependence which all feel for the Government, that omnipotent abstraction. It is always the Government that must give—more schools, more land, more pay, more prestige. 'Why does the Government not get rid of the Indians—send us to universities—give us degrees—give us commissions—give us capital?'

"There are no European ladies here who wish to help us," one young man sadly complained.

"Then you must help yourselves."

He shook his head and smiled. "We cannot do that. We have not enough education. Europeans must help us."

And yet many want the Europeans to go. But then, logic has never been a strong point with the human race.

"North Kavirondo feeds Kenya," said the D.C. "Last year we exported four hundred thousand bags and four-fifths of it came from one district—Kitosh." We stood in a go-down at Broderick Falls among sacks and sacks of maize piled to the roof on all sides, all native-grown.

The machinery of collection and price-fixing is efficient. The grower brings his offering, whether a head-load or a lorry-full, to a produce-buying centre. Here the clerk weighs, bags and bulks it, Indian agents collect it and deliver it to the station and the Maize Control decides its destination. All the troubles of marketing, bagging and transport are taken off the grower's shoulders, and he receives a fixed price for his maize.

Before the war the price, which had fallen as low as 3/6, stood at about 7/- a bag. To-day it is 17/6.<sup>1</sup> This high price has forced every cultivable square yard under maize. You see it growing up to the very walls of the huts, sprouting among the rocks of the steepest hillside.

"Maize is tearing the heart out of North Kavirondo," said the Agricultural Officer.

The local grower does not get the full 17/6. Maize Control deducts for bagging, transport and storage, and 3/- on every bag is now being

<sup>1</sup>Since risen to 20/-.

## KENYA

put into a Betterment Fund to be drawn on for such purposes as manuring and grass-planting. Any individual grower may qualify for the full 17/6 a bag if he follows certain good farming practices defined by the Agricultural department. So far, not a single grower has made the claim.

In a partitioned-off section of one of these Broderick Falls go-downs, Africans were candling and grading eggs. The clerk in charge, a brisk intelligent ex-soldier, explained the system. Fifteen people form themselves into an Egg Circle and appoint one of their number as secretary. Once a week he collects the eggs and brings them in to this centre. Here the clerk, wrestling with a most complicated set of receipts and waybills, pays him according to the grade of his eggs. Prices vary from day to day and the clerk is kept informed every morning by telegram from Produce Control in Kisumu, his employers.

Fifteen 'circles' are centred on Broderick Falls. Graded, candled and boxed, the eggs go off to Nairobi or Mombasa, where this Egg Centre fills a big military contract. At present it handles between 44,000 and 50,000 eggs a month, and pays out between £500 and £1,000.

"It is very popular," said the clerk. This is not a co-operative; but it would seem to hold the germ of one.

As you drive north towards Mount Elgon, bush reappears, and scattered cork or twisted *erythrina* trees. The land looks hot and dry, yet has a rainfall of 60 inches.

"Six inches of topsoil over murrum," said Mr. Williams, the D.C. "Easily erodible, easily droughted. At present it's fertile because it's all been under bush. But in a few years . . ."

Everywhere we passed land newly broken and ploughed among the *combretum* bush. Once or twice, halting on a slight ridge, we looked back on an unbroken sea of maize as far as the eye could carry. Nothing but maize, green and knee-high.

"A few years ago this was all bush and grazing. People have flocked up here to buy land from the Kitosh, and now it's all individually owned. Some people have farms of thirty or forty acres. They grow nothing but maize, year after year in succession. In many places yields have dropped already from eight bags an acre to three."

Whenever we passed a trading post, a row of brightly painted, brand-new light ploughs stood outside the Indian dukas. The hoe is on the way out, at least for breaking land. Not long ago, Agricultural Officers measured the rate of advance in their districts by sales of ploughs. Alas for progress! All these little ploughs are now a matter

## PREVALENCE OF ARSON

for head-shaking. They enable the peasants to exhaust so much more land.

The Government is on the verge of a serious campaign to put across manuring, grass-planting and crop rotations. With money from the Betterment Fund, manure is to be brought in and given free to anyone who can be persuaded to apply it.

"Isn't that robbing Peter to pay Paul?"

"It's an emergency measure to try and save Kitosh while we can. We're also trying to get them to plant grass. It's uphill work. They say: 'We have poor yields because of bad rains. Next year we'll have better rains and heavier crops.' And this isn't a good cattle district. Nevertheless we've got somehow to get them to develop livestock."

Persuasion, propaganda, 'the introduction of improved methods'; they sound so easy, so beneficent—at a distance, and on paper. People *must* see reason when a thing is for their own good. . . . And then we came to the charred remains of a burnt-out bungalow.

"That was an Agricultural Officer's home. They burnt it down. They're not very easy people, the Kitosh. The chief of this location, Kimilili, is one of the old school—loyal to the Government, believes in discipline. The young men have made several efforts to get rid of him. Things have been quieter since we stationed a policeman here."

The policeman looked very young, his situation lonely. Apart from a solitary Mission, his nearest white neighbours are 30 miles away. His quarters are a mud hut with openings for doors and windows and a thatch full of rats, with a mud partition to divide his office table from his camp bed. Outside lie the shambas of Kitosh, the remains of the burnt house and, above and beyond, the massive Elgon with a crown of cloud, rising from the plain like a great wave upgathered from a level ocean.

"Arson is the principal amusement here," said the policeman. "People are always burning down each others' huts to settle grudges, sometimes with the owners in them. It's almost impossible to catch them."

We ate our picnic lunch off his camp table and wondered what he did of an evening in this lonely spot.

"Sometimes I watch the bats chasing the rats out of the rafters." Bats can be quite aggressive, it seems. "Sometimes there's a fire to go to."

Chief Kimilili's brick-and-tile house and office are more or less arson-proof. They are pleasantly laid out in a new style being introduced all over Kenya. The idea behind it is to create small villages or market

## KENYA

towns at the headquarters of each of the 'locations' into which the native areas are divided. (Each location has its chief, and elected 'location councils' are being gradually added—comparable to the mulaka councils of Uganda.) This at Kimilili's is embryonic but typical. The chief's quarters, the market, a future dispensary, a football field, a small social hall and information room and here—though not everywhere—a spinning and weaving school.

The buxom, self-possessed Kitosh woman in charge of this was trained at the Government centre at Kericho. Here at Kimilili's, her home location, she has 80 women pupils. The L.N.C. built her little school and provides a free training for any woman so minded. Through the school each pupil can buy herself a spinning wheel at cost price, obtain raw wool, and either sell the yarn or use it to knit garments for her family. Here are the beginnings of a cottage industry that really seems to have caught on.

Will the idea of village life catch on also? Will the village craftsman, the village hall, the village sports and ultimately the village spirit emerge? This is the official hope; for until people come together in groups and learn afresh the give and take of life in a community, and the need for honesty, there can be no true progress. What seems so badly needed is a sense of social responsibility, a growth of public opinion to keep in check the unscrupulous self-seeker. It should be harder to get away with arson in a village, and perhaps the social hall, the debating society and the library will offer alternative distractions.

It is too early yet to say whether the idea will take hold. In the native areas of Kenya it is at least being introduced, and the villages are being well sited and planned. The Local Native Councils favour the scheme and are voting money for it, and new standards of building are being set. If these villages root themselves in the lives of the people there is perhaps some hope that a new sense of community may arise to replace the lost cohesion of the tribe.

We found a crowd assembled under some gum trees near an American Mission known unequivocally as the Church of God. Soon it formed itself into a ring round the table and chairs where the D.C. took his seat, flanked by Mr. Lusiola and two cadets. This was an election held to choose two Local Native Councillors, who will serve a term of three years. It took place in Bunyore, which, with Maragoli next door, is the most congested part of Kavirondo, with an average population density of 766 to the square mile, rising in places to 1,200. It is here that the amount of land at the disposal of each family falls to

## AN L.N.C. ELECTION

three and a half acres, that cattle are fed on thinnings from the cereal crop and that yields of maize have fallen from 10 or 12 bags to an average of two.

After a brief address to the voters, the D.C. called out the four candidates, who publicly affirmed their readiness to stand for election. A daft old man, his slouch hat stuck all over with feathers, added comic relief by shouting rude or senseless remarks. The four candidates left the ring and stood under the gum trees, each apart from the other. Then the crowd, with a good deal of shouting and badinage, regrouped itself in four lines behind the candidates, each voter taking his place behind the man he favoured. Soon it was clear that two of the men would have lost their deposits, had deposits been required of them. The long 'crocodiles' behind the other two almost matched.

When all had taken their places, Mr. Williams and Mr. Lusiola advanced up the lines counting heads. It was a close thing. The leading candidate had 306 votes and the runner-up 303. Both were elected. One, John Adala, had already served a term on the L.N.C.; a trader, the owner of a shop and a lorry, he is a man of means and an active politician. Esau Khamadi is an older and perhaps steadier man, just back from war-time service with the Army Education Corps.

Considering that Bunyore has a population of some 40,000, of whom perhaps one-quarter are adult men, a total of less than 700 voters suggests a poll of well under 10 per cent, and probably under 7 per cent—not an indication of red-hot political enthusiasm, one would say.

The technique of elections is by now well understood, for this system of local government is about 20 years old. Of the three territories Kenya's set-up is, for good or ill, the most democratic. Uganda's reforms of the last two years have introduced the electoral principle, but only the bottom and least powerful tier of councils is elected by the people, whereas in Kenya a majority of the council which does in fact make the important decisions is directly chosen by the populace.<sup>1</sup> In Tanganyika there are as yet no elections at all.

Sometimes it is said that you cannot have successful elections when most of the voters are illiterate. This is quite untrue, as these local elections prove on a small scale, and the constitutions of Ceylon and Jamaica on a much larger one. What may well be true is that illiterate and ignorant people (the terms are not, of course, synonymous) will

<sup>1</sup>In some districts 'location councils' roughly corresponding to Uganda's parish or muluka councils, at a lower level than the L.N.C., have been introduced experimentally, perhaps partly with the aim of puncturing the demagogue. In one place at least (Teita) L.N.C. candidates must first win the approval of their own location council; this is a step towards Uganda's 'ladder' system.



## KENYA

vote only for individuals and not for policies or principles; and that the men they elect may not be any more able than they are to understand policies and principles; and that, since credulity is even greater than among the literate, the demagogue will nearly always win.

Local Native Councils are exotic plants, but the Native Tribunals which function side by side are rooted on indigenous stocks. Among all these Bantu and Nilotic peoples, the hearing of cases by a court of elders was a custom as old, perhaps, as the tribe itself. Much of the time of older men was in fact given up to magisterial duties, and it was the duty of all litigants to keep the Bench supplied with meat and beer.

Now the beer and meat have gone but the courts still deal with every case that arises between African and African except the most serious in our eyes, such as murder and robbery with violence and rape.

We stopped at a little open-sided court-house to observe the meting out of justice. Three judges sat on a raised platform. (The full panel consists of four men suggested by the people and nominated by the Government, plus a permanent paid president—a stipendiary magistrate, in fact.)

In the box a young woman was petitioning for divorce, because her husband had refused to give her food and clothing. Her brother deposed that the husband had returned two cows but owed him two more. The husband, a sulky and harassed-looking young man, did not deny the ill treatment but said that he had returned all the cows.

At this point the native oath was taken. The three parties to the dispute stood beside a circle of stones outside the court-house. Each in turn lifted a pot of water to his head, held a stone in his right hand and swore to tell the truth and the truth only.

"After a death," explained Mr. Lusiola, "the heads of the mourners are shaved near the hut where the corpse has been buried. This pot represents the shaving water, the stone in the right hand represents the dead body. If they lie, they too will become corpses."

Back in court, the divorce was granted, one more cow to be returned, and the matter was over and done with.

"It's much more complicated for Christians," said Mr. Lusiola. "They must prove adultery before a magistrate under British law, which leads to many delays and troubles. Some Christians ignore it, and this is a source of friction between Missions and the people."

Many differences exist between native law and ours, and he would be a rash man who held that the alien was on all counts the superior. The idea of murder as a crime against society never emerged in the

## NATIVE THEORIES OF LAW

tribal state; murder was a crime against the victim's family, who had to be compensated. The practice of hanging a man for murder seems to most Africans, even after half a century of enlightenment, pointless and wasteful. (But not abhorrent: the notion of ridding society of a dangerous pest was well understood, but confined to sorcerers and habitual thieves, who were considered far more harmful than men who merely lost their tempers and were over-hasty with club or spear.) Even more absurd, in their view, in fact positively crazy, is the idea of keeping a murderer for years on an excellent diet at the expense of the law-abiding. If the injured parties—the victim's family—draw no compensation from a dead body, still less do they derive benefit from an imprisoned one whose upkeep they, and other law-abiding citizens, must pay for.

It is a matter for argument as to which theory is the soundest, but not as to which, in Africa, is the most effective. Crimes of violence and against property have increased out of all knowledge since imprisonment and British laws of evidence replaced compensation and the summary common-sense jurisdiction of native courts.

Meanwhile these tribunals get through a vast amount of work with remarkably little friction. In North Kavirondo the courts such as we visited, one for each location, heard last year 17,092 cases. Of these, 11,248 were carried to an Appeal Tribunal sitting in Kakamega, again a purely native court, and only 310 were taken from there to the District Officer. A trickle of 32 got through to the Provincial Commissioner, the last court of appeal.

This chain of native courts, with appeals lying to the administration, has so far been kept apart (in spite of several efforts by the lawyers to capture it) from the colonial legal system with its judges and barristers, its juries and technicalities and its appeal to the learned but law-bound Supreme Court. Nor may men plead through lawyers in native courts; they must speak for themselves. Whether or no this is sound theoretically, I doubt if there is anyone who knows African justice at first hand who does not pray that native courts will long continue as little gardens of equity and simplicity in the thickets of an alien and over-complex system of law.

The hospital at Kakamega has 195 beds and 350 patients. That is typical of hospitals almost anywhere in East Africa.

"We are linked up with fifteen dispensaries," said the European doctor in charge, "and have two ambulances going round to collect serious cases; of course we need more." In spite of the over-crowding,

## KENYA

everything was clean and spruce and had a sort of aura of efficiency. Of all his achievements this doctor took most apparent pride in a kitchen boiler of his own design made by the local gold-mine, and a banned laundry. His plans, at least, had been banned by Nairobi, and an official design substituted.

"That laundry," he said, pointing at it with grim satisfaction, "cost twenty-five pounds complete; the one I was *supposed* to build—an 'approved design'—cost two hundred and fifty pounds."

The 'malnutrition block' is the most fascinating and distressing part of this hospital.

In one of the wards a girl with limbs like sticks and a poor wasted body, who looked perhaps fourteen, held a tiny creature in her arms.

"Amazing vitality," commented the doctor, "that such a woman can still become pregnant!" He pulled aside the blanket; the baby had a puny wizened face like an infant monkey; it was light as thistledown; and its hair was white.

"A typical case of malignant malnutrition. You see, the hair has lost the pigment and also the kink; it's straight instead of woolly; often eyebrows and eyelashes fall out. Babies are not supposed to show symptoms of malnutrition while on the breast. But they do!"

A small boy, stark naked and with a hugely distended belly, stood by himself, crying. He, too, had white hair. The doctor approached him but he stood off, protesting, and would not allow even an African nurse to approach.

"He's got character, that one," chuckled the doctor, saluting that spark of spirit in the mocked frame; and added: "He looks about two, but he's probably four or five—that stunted growth is typical. Sometimes they whimper all day from hunger when they're on a full diet for the first time in their lives—they miss the blown-out feeling caused by a starchy diet. At first we have to be very careful. The walls of their intestines are paper-thin and lose the power of absorption; the children vomit when we put them on proteins."

To see such sights for the first time evokes many questions. Why such prolonged and severe malnutrition in a region of such fertility? Is it widespread? And can it be cured?

"It's due to ignorance rather than poverty," the experts say. "Most of these patients come from one location on the borders of Uganda. Nearly all their families own cows, but the children never get a drop of milk. The men drink it, or make it into ghee to sell to Indians. The babies are simply stuffed with banana pulp or posho—all starch. In a nutrition survey in Maragoli, we found the only group suffering from

## MALIGNANT MALNUTRITION

clinical symptoms of malnutrition to be children between two and ten. The adults had all the proteins.

"Nevertheless, although most of the malnutrition is still preventible, it's a sharp warning for the future. Many families must now supplement what they grow by food bought in the market, and there's a general shortage of protein. Next time we have a bad season . . ."

Malnutrition has probably always existed; better medical facilities and the increasing confidence of women in doctors has merely brought more of it to light. Much of the pioneer work was done in Uganda where, in spite of the soil's amazing fertility and the people's wealth, it is comparatively common. In the absence of scientific surveys, doctors cannot say whether it is growing more widespread or less so. On the one hand, families now sell more of their milk and ghee instead of consuming it, and the growth of population is obviously squeezing down the diet; on the other, a good many people are hearing for the first time about balanced diets and the correct feeding of children.

Can it be cured? Yes, given time, patience and careful feeding. Time especially; it may take years before these wizened bodies fill out, the match-stick legs slowly thicken.

A house has been built for these children, or those of them relinquished by their mothers. (A row of play-pens stood on the veranda, a row of pots in the wash-room.) Here trained African women bring them up under the doctor's eye in a hygienic, routine-bound, most un-African fashion, on food quite different from any they would get at home. Slowly, they are recovering; barring accidents, all will survive. Even 10 years ago, all would have perished.

You can look across from the malnutrition block to the handsome new maternity ward, and it is hard not to say to the doctors: "Here you save babies from malnutrition, over there you see that more are safely born in order to make malnutrition worse, as population pressure rises. In the end famine must be the only answer."

The doctors are well aware of this dilemma. They can only shrug their shoulders and reply: "Our job is to save lives, and to make life better for the living. It's up to others, the politicians and rulers and the people themselves, to see that the lives we save aren't found superfluous, and wasted." In fact these doctors are in much the same position as the physicists who learnt how to manipulate the atom. Unfortunately all history shows that to pursue knowledge is a great deal easier than to use it wisely.

## KENYA

### KAPSABET

The Nandi escarpment rises steeply from the Kavirondo plain. The road climbs up through deep forest, and as you rise the air grows crisp and fresh and has the feel of mountains in it, with a scent of leaves.

Over the escarpment's summit you leave the forest and come out on to one of the loveliest lands that could gladden any human eyes. Everywhere the grass is green as in a spring meadow. For miles and miles your eye travels over hills and dales towards blue misty mountains and a wide cloud-painted sky. The very air sparkles. A mild sun illuminates the grasses, the turned earth is moist and chocolate-red, the cool air invigorates, you have the feeling that you are standing on the rim of the world. You are, indeed, between six and seven thousand feet above sea level, on a great wide saddle that rears up between the lake basin and the distant deserts of the north.

Two generations sat side by side in the court-house at Kapsabet, the Nandi headquarters. There was Elijah, a sturdy, heavy man in an army greatcoat bearing the big brass badge of a chief on its lapel, vice-chairman of the L.N.C.; and next to him its secretary, a tall, lithe young man in a neat made-to-measure suit, just back from several years spent in Nairobi as a clerk and translator in the Information Office. Chief Elijah I had last seen in Wiltshire, where the size of the cows and the age of the village church had most impressed him, and where, with a little interpretation (for he speaks no English) he had compared notes with the chairman of the local Bench on their magisterial experiences. He has a presence, and 20 years' experience of chieftainship.

Six of the 20 members, besides Elijah, wore a chief's badge, the rest were elected. The D.C. opened the proceedings and dealt with a few matters: a reduction of the sugar ration, the progress of bush-clearing, and complaints about drunkenness—one of the perennial failings of the tribe. In the discussion that followed in Swahili it was interesting to hear on the lips of old gentlemen, with big holes pierced in their earlobes and bead anklets, the only words of English most of them knew: 'black market'.

Half-way through the morning the D.C. withdrew and left Elijah in the chair; two days later he would return to hear their conclusions.

Leaving them to their deliberations, we churned our way through mud-filled ruts to the site of a New Jerusalem.

From the crest of one of the wide green ridges, it looks down over a broad wooded valley and away and beyond to a distant prospect of mountains. One feels that here indeed the perfect city might stand.

## A NEW JERUSALEM

I daresay this will be the very first town of Africa in which a social centre will be the first completed building, roofed and ready before a house or a shop has taken shape.

"This is the concert hall with stage," said a zealous young Development Officer (a DARA man), standing amid the joists. "Opening out on this side is the library; Chief Elijah wants to combine it with a museum of Nandi relics; on that side is the recreation room. We've got a welfare worker, a Nandi ex-soldier, under training now at the Jeanes School. He'll organise lectures, plays, cinema shows . . ."

The Nandi are warrior-cattlemen allied to the Masai, with a tradition of raiding and resistance to 'civilising influences'. They have eschewed schools and been looked on as a picturesque but backward people. What use would they have for libraries and cinemas?

"An extraordinary change has come over the Nandi," I was told, "in the last few years. They've suddenly woken up to education and progress. They'll support anything now that leads to this. And so far they're so nice and *sensible* about it!"

Kaptumo, for instance (the name of the new town) is being built, and well built, very cheaply, because the people volunteer to help with unpaid labour, and to cart sand and clay from the nearby stream. And the Development Officer is good at making do. He burns good tiles from clay dug almost on the spot, using volunteer or prison labour, and has found a kind of mortar in the river excellent for plastering walls. As a result, the hall is going up for a cost of about £300.

"Now here," he said, pacing the springy green turf (as sweet as butter, one could see, and full of white clover), "is a row of shops, and the market will be held under that tree. A beer-shop and several tea-shops are over here, the butchery and dairy in that direction; and those are the shops for carpenters, blacksmiths and the like. We've already had several applications from ex-soldiers."

The turf is still bare, and under the tree sat three old men on kitchen chairs, with a group of more old men squatting in a circle beside them. All wore ox-skins and many bangles, snuff-horns and charms. This was a Native Tribunal in session.

Nearby, a row of gum trees and some old earthworks indicate a European interlude, otherwise obliterated. A small fort was built here at the time of the troubles in 1905, when the Nandi took to plundering the new railway, and murdered so many policemen that two military expeditions had to be sent against them.

Of old, the Nandi had no chiefs. Control was wielded by *laibons*, the magicians, all descendants of a celebrated Masai who had been adopted

## KENYA

into the tribe four generations back. The most powerful of these, a man named Koitalel, was shot during these troubles, and the office of chief *laibon* passed to another family.

In 1923 one of Koitalel's sons, by name Kimanye, was secretly acclaimed the rightful head of the *laibons*. He had been taught by his mother from his earliest childhood to nourish a spirit of revenge for his father's murder, as he believed it to be, and in no time he had started to inflame the people, urging them to 'cleanse the country' of an alien Government.

Nandi warriors then planned to hold a ceremony forbidden since the suppression of the 1905 rebellion, and all the talk was of spear-blooding, plunder and revenge. A white bullock was selected for the sacrifice, a day fixed. Three days before the event, Kimanye was arrested. The ceremony, and with it the rising, was still-born. As for Kimanye, he was exiled to Meru (a delightful spot) and returned seven years later to become, after an interval, a respected member of the L.N.C. and to die in his bed in 1939.

It was the *laibons'* principal duty to secure ancestral approval for cattle raids by means of sacrifices, and in return for their services they received a share of the loot. Clearly *laibons* had a vested interest in the promotion of raids; and when these became intolerably frequent, and innocent herders were speared, the Government one day swooped on the whole clan and concentrated them all in a certain part of Nandi country called Location 26.

Here they have no doubt set up a veritable Magicians' Circle, and perhaps wile away the time by practising on clouds, for rain-making or repelling is one of their minor arts. That their skill at times impresses European sceptics as well as native believers is demonstrated in the following note, made by a D.C. who one day received a visit from a *laibon* in camp. A heavy thunderstorm was approaching, and hoping, perhaps, to discredit him, the D.C. challenged his visitor to send it away. 'The *laibon* at once waved a long wand three times at the advancing rain-clouds, whereupon the clouds stopped in their advance and were seen to go back, and the rain stopped at the spot where the camp was.'

Clouds are amenable; not so the *chemosit*, a devil which frightens *laibons* as much as everyone else, and no wonder, for it has one leg and nine buttocks, and eats people. And then there is the famous Nandi bear which lives in the forest I had come through on the way to Kapsabet. It has been seen quite often, as a rule only at night or in the dusk. A signed statement in the office at Kapsabet records how one

## BARATON STOCK FARM

day, when a farmer was planting coffee at a place near the forest's margin, some of his men came to him excitedly shouting that a big beast with 'long black hair and a long tail had just killed a pig'; its head, they added all too vaguely, was 'very bad'. Hurrying to the scene he found, sure enough, a dead pig, and some long black hair lost by the assailant in the tussle, and the stomach and heart of the pig had been torn out. His search for the beast was vain.

Sceptics suggest an especially bold and large hyena, but the Nandi say that their bear walks on two legs, and that you can sometimes hear a dreadful, unearthly howling in the stillness of the night.

A few miles out of Kapsabet lies the Baraton Government farm, where an enthusiast named Warwick Guy is at work on the breeding of bigger and better Nandi cattle.

Mr. Guy, and men like him, are in fact doing for the African breed of cattle, the Zebu, what men like Robert Bakewell and Jethro Tull did in the eighteenth century for British breeds of livestock. In those days there were no recognised breeds, still less high-yielding strains within a breed; there were just cattle or sheep; and it was the achievement of these first breeders to select, by eye and a measure of performance, the ancestors of all our superb pedigree beasts.

It is no easy matter to apply these same principles to the unselected, mixed, rough African breed, and to get results (as they now must) in a fraction of the time. In fact all the first-comers, scientists and farmers alike, believed that these stunted little African cows, who gave milk in teacupfuls, could be improved only by crossing them with imported British cattle. A few independent-minded persons thought the native stock itself to be capable of improvement without the admixture of imported blood, though the process, they knew, would take much longer. One or two European farmers made a start, and in 1931 Warwick Guy began at Baraton with a small herd of Nandi cattle picked out by eye.

Their progeny now occupy the neat grey buildings and thick green pastures of Baraton, as sleek as spaniels, and twice the animals their scruffy parents were. Here yields are reckoned not in gallons of milk but in pounds of butter-fat, as in New Zealand, and the Baraton herd average is 180 lb. in a lactation, rising to 250 lb. for the best cows. The average for the Colony's grade herds is only 80-90 lb.

Mr. Guy has done this, as Bakewell and Tull did it, by in-breeding. Fathers are crossed with daughters, mothers with sons, for several generations.



## KENYA

"They've kept up close in-breeding with mice for seventy generations, and the last mice were every bit as vigorous as the first. What you do get, to start with, is a twenty-five per cent wastage. One animal in four will be a freak—dwarfism is the commonest form. Once you've weeded out this tendency, the lines breed true. We think we've fixed two lines here. One of our bulls always adds ninety pounds of butter-fat to the yields of his heifer progeny."

There is something of the refined, nervous Jersey look about the best of these cows. They live the lives of the privileged, each with her personal attendant.

"We take each calf away at birth, before the mother can lick it. She licks the boy's hands instead. He draws a little milk, and she licks that. Then she adopts that particular milker, and won't let anyone else come near her."

As we walked round the clean sheds with their shingle roofs of silvery-grey, a black cow holding herself aloof was bellowing her head off in the yard.

"I'm afraid her milker's off on a drunk. That's one of our problems."

The milkers are Nandi pupils undergoing a two-year course in all the main branches of cattle-raising and dairying, as applied in practice to Nandi conditions and Nandi herds.

Baraton's purpose is not merely to breed better cattle but to pass them on to the Nandi. (On these Nandi pastures graze at least 170,000 head of cattle, which gives to every family an average of 17 or 18 beasts.) The valuable young bulls are given away. Over 30 have been issued through an all-Nandi committee which selects the recipients of a gift for which Europeans would pay sums running into three figures.

At present, because the Baraton herd is regularly dipped against East Coast fever, bulls can go to only one part of the country, known as the Ndalat 'development area', where dipping is practised.

This 'development area' is in fact an experiment to discover whether the country can be saved from disaster. For it is seriously over-stocked. Unless the Nandi can be persuaded in time to follow proper methods of animal husbandry, even these rich pastures will go under.

Like a native stool, the Ndalat development scheme (another DARA project) stands on three legs: dipping, culling and controlled grazing.

Since at present four calves out of every five die of East Coast fever, you would think that to introduce dipping would be a popular move; but the Nandi were at first full of suspicion. They argued that people who built such costly objects as cattle-dips would sooner or later wish to use them, and expel the local inhabitants. Certain elders, how-

## FULL POCKETS AND NO CYCLES

ever, visited Baraton and were impressed by what they saw; moreover, they knew Mr. Guy (who has stayed put for 17 years) and trusted him. They agreed to the building of a single dip, and gradually people began to use it.

"That corner's turned," said Mr. Guy. "We have four dips now in the area and fourteen thousand cattle going through every week. They do better, look better, and fetch better prices at the stock sales."

Dipping without culling would merely make matters worse. To balance the first, monthly sales are held in each of the four blocks into which the 'development area' has been divided, in order to provide the Nandi with an easy means of getting their culled stock right out of the district. There is no trouble about finding buyers, once cattle-owners can be persuaded to sell. It is one of the paradoxes of the time that while grave damage is being done to many parts of the Colony by overstocking, there is also an acute shortage of meat.

People walk for miles to these cattle sales, not as a rule to buy but to look. It is a day in the country. Travelling hawkers spread out their cheap but eagerly-bought goods—combs, mirrors, mugs, teapots, pencils, safety-pins. Coffee-sellers carry steaming mugs to the ringside and men cook hot stews on open fires for the hungry. In the buyers' pen stand tall and turbaned Somalis, burly Kavirondo butchers, a white man from the Government-controlled Meat Marketing Board bidding in open competition against the others and more often than not outbid. Here you may see the young warrior in his greased red pigtails and cloak of skins leaning on a long spear beside a brother who has fought in Burma, and wears his army greatcoat and a pair of trousers already tattered and torn.

"There are men walking about to-day," said Mr. Guy, "with two or three hundred pounds in their pockets, and nothing in the world to spend it on. Look at these combs and mirrors! What *they* want is posho mills, ploughs and bicycles—even cars—and good clothing. Can't be had. Send us a ship-load of mills and bicycles and we'll get out the meat."

This one corner of Nandi, the Ndalat section, is disgorging through its stock-sales more cattle than any other district of Kenya. Even so, it is not yet disgorging enough. Nandi as a whole must reduce its live-stock by about one-quarter if it is to be saved.

Like all who know them, Warwick Guy has a real respect and affection for this manly and often turbulent people, without disguising from himself the fact that so many are stock-thieves and drunkards.

"They're hard to convince, but the great thing about the Nandi is

## KENYA

that they'll listen to argument, and if you do convince them, they'll stay convinced. And if they say they'll do a thing you can take their word for it. They don't change their minds half-way, like some tribes I could name."

There is a development committee composed entirely of Nandi, and of it Mr. Guy said:

"They really run the show. We do nothing without their agreement. It may take a bit of time for them to see the point, but once they do, they'll get the people behind them. Controlled grazing is our next big hurdle. To do that we must fence, and fencing arouses the deepest suspicions. . . ."

Events in Nandi, said a recent official report, were balanced 'on the verge of disaster or spectacular success'. It is too soon to be sure, but at present the balance seems to be tipping slowly over towards success.

Why is this story so different from that which must be told, say, at Machakos? No doubt there are many reasons, among them perhaps these three. First, the character of the people; these Hamitic folk have not the tortuous minds of the Bantu nor their passion for intrigue, nor do they listen readily to political shock-troops from Nairobi who belong to tribes they despise. Second, their backwardness in education, which has hitherto resulted in a dearth of young men hag-ridden by the need to prove their worth by conflict with authority, much as their fathers proved it by blooding of spears. And third, the residence among them of a man they know and trust, so that suggestions reach them not from remote authority speaking through a D.C. here to-day and gone to-morrow, but from the man at Baraton who knows a good cow when he sees one and gave their cousin a very excellent bull.

As I left Baraton, some young Englishmen drove up in a truck to discuss a contract for installing more dips—Overlanders, newly come, and in search of work as a 'building unit'. One of the team is a carpenter, one a plumber, one an all-round builder and one a decorator, and all are ready to turn their hand to anything from Government House to a maize-crib. They are getting all the work they can handle, and more.

## KERICHO

Accustomed as one becomes to learning of odd jobs performed by D.C.s, I was startled to hear the incumbent of Kericho remark.

"You find me rather busy. I'm in the midst of negotiating about payment of bride-price for twenty virgins." Observing a lift of the eyebrows, he added: "For the *laibons*, of course."



Kikuyu elder

At the market, N. Kavirondo





Modern African housing on a Kericho tea estate

Plucking tea at Kericho



## MARRYING OFF MAGICIANS

These young men live close by in an enclosure surrounded by a thick hedge, in the care of a retired K.A.R. sergeant. It was incongruous to see the lithe young Kipsigis, combs perched gaily on their woolly heads, seated at looms and weaving dexterously (weaving is almost a mania at Kericho), and others in a little open-sided schoolroom learning their letters. All belong to the same clan as the Nandi magicians of Location 26, being in fact descendants of one Kipchomber, a brother of the Nandi's chief *laibon* whom the Kipsigis invited over several generations back, so impressed were they with the skill and power of this clan of magicians.

In Kipsigis country they caused even more trouble than their Nandi cousins. "About nineteen twenty-five," says an official report, "they . . . were known to be conducting felonies such as stock raids and murders in areas so remote as Nanyki some two hundred odd miles away." Matters got worse, "the *laibons* defied the Government at every turn," and in 1934 a special ordinance was passed enabling the Government to remove them and their families in a body to a place in South Kavirondo, about 100 miles away.

There they still are; but as their children grew up, a new problem arose. The young men refused adamantly to marry the locals, and when they began to show incestuous leanings the Government took alarm and decided to find them wives. Twenty young *laibons* were brought back to Kericho, and when the D.C. has married them off they will be allowed to settle close by, under the eye of authority. Meanwhile the D.C. comes in for some good-humoured badinage from the Kipsigis about his purchase of virgins.

Driving through Kipsigis country, we passed a party of girls swathed in cowhide with slits for eyeholes, decorated boldly with clay, red ochre and beads for their initiation ceremony; and then came immediately to an ultra-modern tea factory standing up like a fortress on the crest of a hill, full of expensive machinery and manned by Africans standing over big rotary crushers that break up the leaf and fill the air with a sweet flowery scent. There is even a device for sucking dust out of the atmosphere, to spare the workers tickles in the throat.

Two giant companies, Brooke Bond's and Findlay Muir's, dominate the scene. Between them they support a labour force numbering, with dependants, at least 17,000. Such estates can afford to treat their workers well, and do so. It cannot be avoided that 'labour' on this scale must become a sort of component like power or markets, to be thought of in the mass and not known individually. At least it is thought of with care, and the tea estates are popular employers.

## KENYA

The old idea of housing in barrack-like 'lines' has given way, as it has in the towns, to the idea of independent cottages. These are going up in clutches, sturdy little stone or brick buildings with shingle roofs and concrete floors and fireplaces, one to each family.

"Oddly enough our worst trouble," said one of the managers, "was bed-bugs. They got so bad that they actually drove the labour away. But I found a way to defeat them." A light of battle came into his eye; clearly this topic engaged his enthusiasm only slightly less than hunting in Ireland when on leave.

"Most bed-bugs spend their day in the roof. I ran a trough filled with water or paraffin along the tops of the walls to trap them on their way down. Do you know that we caught as many as a thousand bed-bugs in a single room? It was shattering! Now we have them under control, but not yet eliminated. Do you know that a bed-bug can live for two years without food? . . ."

In spite of such afflictions, the health of the labour force is good. At one of the estate hospitals an able German-Jewish doctor who had survived Dachau presides over a well-stocked clinic, two small wards and a maternity block under an African midwife, and has four dispensaries at different points on the estate, with African orderlies in charge, and an ambulance to bring in severe cases.

"We have sixty miles of roads," said the manager, "and two power stations; our own workshop and repair depot for the transport, three large factories; an annual production of five million pounds of tea . . ."

"Worms are the main source of day-to-day sickness," said the doctor. "And of course malaria. The health of all improves markedly almost from the day they arrive and are put on to a balanced diet. By far the worst, on arrival, are the Banyaruanda from Belgian territory."

I was surprised to meet them again, so far from home. In spite of the tea planters' good reputation with labour, they were at one time so hard pressed that this company sent all the way to far Ruanda to import families at a cost of nearly £30 each. Yet in parts of the Colony, for instance in Ukamba, there were idle young men on famine relief.

Next to his bed-bug device, and a waterproof hooded cape designed to keep the pluckers dry, the manager seemed proudest of a home-made mobile boiler from which gruel is served piping hot to field workers first thing in the morning.

"No man here starts work on an empty stomach. When they knock off, generally about midday, they have a mug of tea with plenty of milk and sugar, and then go home to their big meal—and the rest of

## POPULAR FACTORY WORK

the day's their own." Their ration includes two pounds of potatoes a day. Although their diet is a great deal better than anything they get at home, it is still low in proteins. In an effort to rectify this, Brooke Bond's have turned themselves into stockfarmers, and herds of high-grade Friesians and Ayrshires graze between the tea plantations. This is not cattle country, it is too wet and lush (the rainfall is 80 inches) and disease after disease afflicted the cattle.

"I didn't know so many existed!" said the manager—another Irishman. "But we're over the worst of it now." Their 6,000 workmen get free milk in the ration, and as much meat as their stockman can raise from land that can be spared from the estate, which has 6,000 acres planted in tea. At present this is sufficient to supply each worker with about a pound of meat a week, which he buys for the nominal sum of 3d. a pound.

"The trouble is that instead of eating it they sell it in Kericho for two or three times as much, so we get no forrader over proteins. We tried soya bean flour, but they wouldn't have it. They won't have communal feeding yet, either—but that may come."

Brooke Bond's have already introduced it successfully into their packing factory. This packs tea for the local market on behalf of the whole industry. It handles some 10,000,000 lb. a year, of which 7,000,000 are consumed, mainly by Africans, in the Colony. Here the factory hands, dressed in clean white coats, work an eight-hour day like a European, with an hour off for a free meal in the canteen. Some of them have been working here steadily for 10 or 15 years.

How has this management solved the problem of getting Africans to stick to full-time, regular employment? For every year they stay, they get a rise of 1/- a month, so that some are drawing 40/- and full rations, comfortable pay by local standards. And it is pleasant work: clean, dry and easy, consisting mainly of sitting at a bench while a machine does most of the work. Its monotony if anything commends it to a people for whom monotony has become a natural and therefore a looked-for condition of existence.

Everything about a tea estate seems clean and tidy—even genteel. The factories are spick and span, the roads well kept, the managers well-dressed, their wives *comme-il-faut* and given to afternoon calling, the gardens colourful and kempt—Kericho is a great place for gardening—and the tea itself, a pretty but rather smug little bush (it is kept little by pruning) covers the steep red hillsides without a single miss or break, a gleaming carpet of glossy leaves. It has good reason for smugness, and doubtless despises less fortunate plants that are the constant prey



## KENYA

of low parasites—for instance coffee, fighting an endless battle against beetles, borers, mildews, scales, fungi and pests of every kind. Almost every plant and shrub has its enemies, tea, almost alone, seems immune.

"It's too good to be true," say the managers. "We're crossing our fingers"—especially since a new disease, called 'blister blight,' has appeared in Ceylon.

And this sturdy camelia does so well in Kericho's mild climate, with sparkling morning sunshine and afternoon downpours and the crispness of a 6,000 feet altitude, combined with tropical lushness and a deep, crumbly, fertile soil. Yields are enormous, ranging up to 2,000 lb. of 'made' tea to the acre, and the earliest plantations are yielding more after 20 years' continuous plucking than they were at the start. (The African Highlands' land, once part of a forest buffer between hostile Kipsigis and Luo, was the scene of an attempt by a group of disabled officers to establish themselves after the 1914-18 war; it failed, and the land, now immensely valuable, was bought then for a song by its present owners.)

Quality, on the other hand, is indifferent, and the experts are constantly trying to better it, hampered by the inability of scientists to define exactly the origins of flavour. I sometimes wonder what was the ultimate flavour of the leaf reposing in a special bin to which I was once led by the manager of a smaller estate, now swallowed by one of the giants.

"This," he said proudly, "contains our very *best* tea, for export only. It's specially selected and packed, and we believe that we are at last beginning to turn out a tea that will approach the fine high-grown Ceylon and Darjeeling. . . ."

He flung open the lid; reverently, we peered inside; and a stark naked African popped out and vanished with a howl among the machinery.

## LONDIANI

Here you have left behind the lushness of a land of high rainfall. All is crisp and dry: the air, the grass, the great open downland that rolls on and on into the horizon like the sea. Gone are the shady flowering trees and creepers, the moist red earth; here are the trees of dry places, the juniper and that needle-leaved conifer *podocarpus*, clustering as if for comfort in hollows and in dark bands across the downs; and the soil powders underfoot.

The air is cold. The sky seems close and all about; you might be standing on the roof of the world. At Mau Summit road and railway

## A FOREST STATION

rise to 9,000 feet. This is the broad, high western wall of the Rift Valley, the Mau escarpment, in places over 10,000 feet and covered at the crest with mountain vegetation—bamboo and juniper and giant heather—and full of little bogs.

There are few rivers, and those mere streams that dwindle to rivulets between the rains. Because of this, and because of the cold and bleakness, these downs are sparsely occupied. After the lakeland hive, you are struck here by a sense of space and freedom and solitude, a sort of cold magnificence. Here man is dwarfed by nature, rather than nature raped by man.

Once a great society of birds and beasts lived here unmolested, coming and going in freedom about the silent forest with its sudden sunlit glades, and on the trackless open downs with never a man in sight. The beauty of the wild life of this land was then a thing of wonder, and we shall never see its like again. Except in the forest the wild life has gone, but big hedgeless fields of wheat and oats rippling in the wind have brought a lesser beauty.

There seems no reason here why a field should not go on indefinitely, but no doubt even tractors have their limits. Now you are in the 'White Highlands', and here and there pass terraced fields of greyish blue with a dusting of white. This is pyrethrum, that useful daisy (its powdered flower-heads are lethal to insects) which has proved a standby at these high altitudes. For the rest, all is pasture, and you see here the big, straight-backed cattle of Northern Europe, Friesians and Shorthorns and Ayrshires. This climate suits them better than it suits the Zebu, being so like home, and the ticks and pests viciously active at lower altitudes do not thrive. Sometimes you pass a reed-fringed dam, its still waters as blue as the sky. And the road skirts a swamp that is speckled with the pink and white heads of gladioli.

At Londiani the Government has a small forest station and a baby school—there are 12 students—to train Forest Officers newly out of the services—mostly, as it happens, from the Navy. (It says much for the appeal of forestry that many candidates applied to train for a job whose starting pay is £150 a year and whose peak, reached after 20 years, £660.)

Only three per cent of Kenya's total area is under forest—one of the lowest proportions in the world. In the Highlands alone the percentage is only eight. In heavily-populated Japan it was considered unsafe to let the proportion fall below 30 per cent. Even Belgium has six times as much forest, proportionately, as any East African territory.

Yet these forests, the relics of greater things, have their prophets.

## KENYA

"In thirty years' time," said the Assistant Conservator at Londiani, "Kenya's only exports will be softwoods and tea."

His is a convincing thesis. As the population rises, all the food the country can grow will be needed for home consumption. There is a world shortage of softwoods, in sight for many years to come, perhaps indefinitely. And in Kenya softwoods of certain kinds grow quickly, cheaply and well.

"By the time I'm dead," said this enthusiast, "someone may realise that the answer to most of our problems lies in the development of our forest resources. They alone could keep the country. Obviously they'll have to be enlarged and a good deal of land in the native areas put under forest cover to conserve our dwindling springs and rivers. . . . The population? How long must we continue to pretend that every African in Africa can have his eight acres and a cow? Can't anyone do simple arithmetic? Does anyone really believe that Kenya can advance on a sole basis of allotment farming?"

"Besides, lots of Africans don't want to be peasant farmers if they can possibly avoid it. Why should they, any more than we do? Forestry would provide healthy employment for hundreds of thousands. A fully developed scheme, with all the sawmills and transport and ancillary industries, could support a total (with wives and families) of perhaps 400,000 people. Controlled labour in the forests can provide very large quantities of foodstuffs as a sideline, and if necessary Government could move whole blocks of Africans into the forests temporarily while run-down native lands were being rehabilitated. A real all-out forest policy could transform the face of Kenya in twenty-five years!"

A programme of forest development which allows for 6,500 acres to be planted annually has in fact been approved, and DARA is to spend £459,000 on it in ten years. This is bolder than anything hitherto attempted; even so, less than three per cent of the total DARA vote is to go on forestry. And there is so much leeway to make up. For the last 10 years cutting out has greatly exceeded new planting. Before the war, Kenya had 16 foresters to look after about 4,000,000 acres of timber: no wonder that fires were frequent and damaging. Now this number is to be raised to 40, more African forest scouts are being trained and new fire-fighting machinery has arrived.

All this is something, but not enough for the foresters, whose original plan was much pared. They would like to see a target of 200,000 acres set, instead of a mere 65,000 acres.

"We have to consider local demands as well as exports," Mr. Graham

## 'THE SCANDINAVIA OF THE EAST'

said. "If the African's standard of living is really to rise he will want furniture, doors, floors, windows. Local industries will eat it up. In this country consumption of round timber averaged about one-third of a cubic foot a head each year before the war. In England consumption is about fifteen cubic feet, in America two hundred and twenty eight.

"We're already cutting twice as much fuel and four times as much timber as we were in nineteen thirty-nine. If standards of living go on rising as we hope they will, we must plan for big developments even to be self-supporting, before thinking of exports. And export we must, and fortunately can."

The Conservator of Forests has envisaged Kenya as 'the Scandinavia of the East'. Cypress is the softwood on which hopes are hung—or rather cypresses, for there are many kinds. All are exotics. Some were introduced as long ago as 1910 by a Conservator 'passionately addicted to Mexico', who believed that Mexican conditions most closely resembled those of Kenya.

"One survivor, called *cupressus Benthami*, shows great promise," said Mr. Graham. "Its drawback is its poor shape. So we're selecting seed and hope one day to produce a good, self-perpetuating, millable strain." Such projects take generations to mature. Meanwhile other kinds can be grown immediately and are in fact being planted,<sup>1</sup> as well as pines from New Zealand and Australia.

An ingenious system of planting is the major reason for Kenya's low costs of production. A number of 'squatters' are given a stretch of forest to clear and cultivate. After two years they must plant and tend young trees among the crops. After five years they move on to a fresh patch, and the Forest department takes over the trees. Thus the Government gets old trees cleared out and new ones planted without payment, and the squatter gets for nothing the use of land full of stored-up fertility, grazing for his cattle in the forest glades, and cash from paid employment.

In 40 years' time, royalties alone will come to about £130 an acre on cypress plantations which have cost about £6 an acre to bring to maturity. The Government can look forward to the enjoyment of a gold mine, provided it can bring itself to lock up its money for a generation. This is a thing all Governments find very hard. Meanwhile, land is still being nibbled away from the forest reserves for both African and European settlement.

If foresters are badly paid and never live to see their visions realised, at least their surroundings are noble and as a rule, like sailors, they

<sup>1</sup>The main species are *cupressus lusitanica*, *c. arizonica*, and *c. macracapa*.

## KENYA

give devotion as well as labour to their calling. Trees embrace this Londiani station, tall podoos and rough-barked cedars and thorns, the colonisers; the Assistant Conservator lives in a wooden house smelling aromatically of cedar and furnished with handsome local woods.

Discussing furniture, I put the question:

"Is it true that old English pieces warp in the dry climate of the Highlands?"

"Quite true; but you can get round it by taking them down to the Coast every year."

One had a mental picture of a connoisseur among his treasures remarking: "Yes, I've taken a house at Nyali Beach this year for the dining-room table . . ." I am sure that the Assistant Conservator would do so, if he had a table he really loved.

## NJORO

The township is a single row of Indian dukas facing a little 'park' of young flowering trees, an Indian-owned 'European store', and a post office. In dry weather dust billows out like a smoke-screen behind every passing vehicle, in the rains your car may sink in up to its axles between the dukas and the railway goods yard.

Here you are in the heart of the settled area; in fact Njoro might claim to be the spot where serious white settlement began. The first settlers, it is true, grew the first crops near Nairobi at about the turn of the century, but it was at Njoro, in 1903, that the first big grant of land was made to the settler who, more than any other, pioneered on a bold scale, and who introduced British breeds of sheep and cattle. This was the late Lord Delamere.

"I started to grow wheat in East Africa," wrote this eccentric, hot-tempered, intolerant and courageous peer, "to prove that though I lived on the equator I was not in any equatorial country." His grant of 100,000 acres did in fact straddle that geographical abstraction.

To-day that 100,000 acres embraces some of the most productive farmland in East Africa. Yet then it was so worthless that people thought him foolish to pay rent for it of £200 a year. No plough had ever turned the sod, no crop had been tested. It was uninhabited, untouched, ungrazed save by herds of game that must have been magnificent—zebra, wildebeeste, Thomson's and Grant's gazelle, waterbuck, giraffe. In the forest that then reached almost to the railway were buffalo and elephant, and lions on the plain. Even the Masai with their huge nomadic herds called this land 'the plain of the female rhino without any milk', and let it alone. Delamere, who thought it

was sheep country, was to discover to his cost that they shunned it with good reason. Thereafter he entertained a deep respect for Masai judgment on all livestock affairs.

The largest of the many farms into which Delamere's grant was subsequently divided is one of 12,000 acres, a big concern for these parts. On one side the land rises gently to form a hill from whose rounded summit you may look down on the blue waters of Lake Nakuru, framed in Scottish-looking purple hills, and across to the long sweeping slopes of the extinct volcano Menengai. A fine site for a house: but the farm house is down on the open plain, the plain of the milkless rhino, treeless save for belts of black wattle.

"The basic scheme of the farm," said its industrious, jovial Scots manager, as knowledgeable a farmer as any in East Africa, "is five years grass and five years arable. All the land takes its turn under the plough. I hope to get two thousand acres down to wheat this year. Of course we're almost entirely mechanised. But you have to be careful on this soil."

He kicked into it with his toe, and a greyish powder flew up. "It's light. Humus-deficient. And shallow. Twenty years ago, we used to plough deep with heavy tackle, and we used to turn up the subsoil—lava. There's only a few inches of soil on top. So now this land never sees a plough, after the initial breaking. We do all the cultivation with disc tillers and only go down three inches."

Although this Njoro land looks flat, a great deal of it has been laid out in broad-based terraces by the Soil Conservation Service, who say that soil wash will take place on slopes with a rise as imperceptible as one in 100. Elsewhere the cultivation is laid out in long strips across the slope to halt wash. Along them, at harvest time, whir and clank a fleet of half a dozen combines.

"Our biggest problem," said Hugh Coltart, "is to build up soil fertility. Mixed farming is the only way. We start with a five-year rotation—three years wheat in all, one crop of maize to clean it and one of oats—and then graze cattle in the stubble. By the second year we've got a good Kikuyu-grass sward with wild white clover coming in. Five years' grazing builds up the humus ready for a good wheat crop again—unless of course we have drought or locusts, or rust. We've got a new wheat from the Argentine via Southern Rhodesia, so far resistant to *all* forms of rust. But we're crossing our fingers."

Some 500 Friesians graze over these ley pastures; and their attendant pedigree bulls, each one a picture of compact muscular vigour, are dis-

## KENYA

played with pride in paddocks near the house. As breeding up proceeds, milk yields rise steadily. And as for labour:

"Nearly all our boys," said Mr. Coltart, "are specialists—milkers, tractor-drivers, herds, shepherds and so on. Some of them have been here for twenty years. They get good pay, and most of them I think take a real pride in the job, but then out of the blue——"

He was upset by the recent apprehension of two of his most reliable milkers, one of 15 and the other of 12 years' service—"boys I trusted absolutely"—in the midnight act of smuggling bags of maize to the main road to be picked up by a confederate with a lorry. Such large-scale and organised depredations are becoming more and more common. People blame the black market and the ex-soldiers; farmers are obliged to keep night-watchmen and police dogs, and you hear more disillusioned talk than ever before about African morality.

All this well-farmed and productive land (shipping off perhaps 15,000 bags of grain or more in a season, and at least 10,000 gallons of cream) could not be farmed at all without the pipeline installed by Delamere to carry water from the Mau. For it has no springs or rivers. A borehole sunk on the far side of the farm now feeds troughs and tanks through an extra five miles of piping.

Forty years ago Delamere's sheep, grazing on the natural pastures, died in shoals, and all his cattle fell away to skin and bone. He was forced to move the remnants of his flocks and herds to another district, and the mysterious disease was clumsily named 'Nakuruitis'. No one understood its cause or cure.

To-day there are some 6,000 Corriedales on those pastures, apparently as fit as fleas. Their lambs are vigorous, the rams imported from South Africa so heavily wooled that they look quite square.

This is a minor but impressive triumph for research. A team from the Rowett Institute at Aberdeen was the first to ascribe the cause of 'Nakuruitis' to a deficiency of minerals in the soil. For some years farmers tried feeding iron oxide to their animals with indifferent success. Then a chemist in New Zealand, consulted by a farmer friend in the same predicament, analysed the impurities in a sample of iron oxide and found cobalt. And a shortage of cobalt was proved to be the cause of the trouble in New Zealand. The effect of doses of this obscure mineral on cattle grazing on 'the plain of the milkless rhino' was almost miraculous. All their vigour returned. To-day no cow, sheep or pig on this farm misses its weekly cobalt ration, and 'Nakuruitis' is a thing of the past.

Hugh Coltart runs the farm single-handed so far as Europeans go,

## PROGRESS IN FORTY YEARS

with a staff of about a hundred Africans. The owner is an absentee landlord, Lord Egerton of Tatton, who has sunk large sums of money in this and other well-found enterprises. Such capitalists may be socially condemned by our age, but when it comes to taking the risks of development in a 'new' and therefore under-capitalised country, they achieve a stability which 'small men', hobbled by mortgages and at the mercy of booms and slumps, can only envy.

What is the capital value of such a farm to-day? Hugh Coltart shook his head; such questions were for expert valuers, and he had never thought about it; at a very rough guess, with the cattle and sheep and machinery and workshops, the piping and fencing and trees and standing crops, 'somewhere in the region of £100,000'.

Forty years ago this land had been a sort of financial *oubliette*. Of it Delamere had written: "The result of a few years of working was that sheep had proved a failure and big losses had been incurred; that the land had been proved unsuitable for cattle . . . and that wheat was proved to have come to stay. That the possibility of ploughing large acreages in a country where the plough had never been seen was proved to be an economic proposition, that large numbers of natives had been taught ploughing and working with other implements; and that I had managed to get rid of £40,000 in cash and had for a time to live on £200 a year. . . ."

The tailpiece to this story is that the soil, light and thin as it is, is to-day in a higher state of fertility than it was when the first sod was broken.

Another 800 acres of the original Delamere grant was presented by Lord Egerton to the Government for use as a training school for Kenya lads anxious to take up farming. This has been temporarily turned over to the training of new settlers coming out from Britain under an official scheme.

To be precise, there are two schemes. Under one, a man with a little capital can borrow up to 90 per cent of his own stake and buy a farm from the Government. Under the other, the Government is itself the landlord and lets farms to tenants with even less capital, providing for them such services as water, roads and fencing. No interest is asked for five years, and tenants can buy their farms in twenty annual instalments. Both kinds of sponsored settler must take an eight months' course at the Egerton School and spend further months, according to need, as farm pupils.

All this is in the charge of a body called the European Settlement



## KENYA

Board, and the money comes out of Kenya's war-time savings. When this is exhausted, the scheme closes. The original plan was to settle 500 new farmers. In the event, the money will not run to more than about 350.

The Farm School lies above Njoro on the lower slopes of the Mau, whose crest sweeps in a dark line across the western horizon. Below roll the plains, away to the south lies the wide cleft of the Rift, away and beyond the farmlands to the east fall the bushclad flats of Kamasia. In the far distance rears the craggy scarp of the great valley's eastern rim and, hidden generally by full and massive cumulus, the dark bulk of the Aberdares. The view is boundless, airy and magnificent. These are the cloud-patterned highlands in their sweeping glory, sublime in mass and colour and dwarfing to insignificance all the works of man. Yet an attractive young lady sitting listlessly on a veranda outside the students' sitting-room shook her blonde head and observed regretfully:

"I'm disappointed. It's not a bit like I thought it would be."

"What did you expect?"

"Well, something more tropical—palm trees and lagoons, that sort of thing."

More than half the 70 students in training have wives and often families with them, and nearly all the women find things different from expectations. At morning tea in the principal's house one of the wives, an eager Scots girl, said:

"To tell the truth, I thought it would be more wild and—well, African. Lions and naked savages and all that. I came prepared to be a pioneer and find it almost suburban!"

The woman next to her, a native of Surrey, disagreed. "I wasn't prepared for anything so rough. The dust on the roads, for instance—it's dreadful; and when it rains, the *mud*! I didn't expect earth closets and that sort of thing. And the farms are so far apart. I'm afraid I may get very lonely!"

"You can't please everyone," said the principal wryly; he finds himself, by calling an Agricultural Officer, not merely lecturing on soil chemistry but refereeing a dispute between Mrs. A. and Mrs. B. and advising Mrs. C. on what to do about little Agatha's schooling. Some of the wives have taken jobs, until their farms are ready, as secretaries, doctors, nurses and teachers. Of all, the philosophic Mr. Booth remarks:

"They'll shake down when they get houses of their own to manage."

The men are of many types. Some were aircraftsmen and petty officers, others Brigadiers and Wing-Commanders. Some approach

## FOUNDATION STOCK

middle age, others are boys of one or two and twenty. Some are be-medalled bomber-pilots or resistance organisers or paratroopers, others had prosaic war careers on farms or in factories. (One of them, a naturalised Frenchman, started as a clerk at the Savoy, continued in the Navy, and opened a toy-shop in Norfolk) All have this in common, that they will throw what little capital they have, derived often from sale of house and car and furniture, into this venture, and must sink or swim hereafter; though some will go under, none can afford to fail for lack of trying. Gone are the days of 'veranda farming', and with them the type of settler—always in a small minority, but gaudy enough to catch the eye—who lived on private means and whisky and now and then made the headlines with scandalous exploits. These Government-assisted newcomers, picked out of many applicants in London, are unlikely to contribute to the lunatic fringe of settlement more than an odd discard or two.

"They're serious-minded," said a settler of 35 years' standing, adding with a trace of nostalgia: "Different from us when we started. But then the country's different—just as well, I dare say. They'll do all right."

No settlers who have ever come to East Africa have had more done for them. They will start with a grounding, at least, in the principles of mixed farming, and at all stages the advice of experts will be at their disposal. They will even be provided, at a nominal cost, with 'foundation stock' bred by the European Settlement Board; which, foreseeing a crippling shortage of females, sent agents to Somalia to bring down several thousand native heifers, and arranged for their artificial insemination by pure-bred bulls. Some 3,000 heifers have passed already through the reception station and their heifer calves, when reared to an age for breeding, will be sold at cost price. By the time the bulk of the new settlers are established, the first of these 'foundation heifers' should be ready.

As for the farms, the Settlement Board has either bought them from previous owners or taken them from a small pool of left-over Crown land. (All of them lay already within the borders of the 'White Highlands'; there has, of course, been no question of taking any native land.) Up to date the Board has acquired rather more than 300,000 acres, compared with a total acreage in European ownership of slightly under 7,000,000.

The scheme has its opponents. "Why should Europeans be brought in largely at public expense," they say, "to take up land that is lying

## KENYA

idle, when so many Africans, whose country it is, are landless and overcrowded?"

"The short answer to that," said one of the Board's officials, "is that Kenya has only one sound basic industry, and that is European farming. It's almost our only producer of wealth. Therefore we have got to strengthen it. If it goes under, Kenya cracks up."

A glance at the revenue figures confirms his remarks. For the last 20 years the sum realised by the direct taxation of Africans has remained constant at a little over £500,000, even though population has risen and wealth, on the whole, increased. Direct taxation paid by the handful of Europeans, and by such few Indians as are caught in its meshes, has mounted steadily and now reaches a sum about five times as high. Probably at least two-thirds of the total revenue comes, directly and indirectly, from European and Indian sources.

At the time of the great depression, a school of thought proved conclusively that, in African conditions, European farming was uneconomic, to be kept alive only by subsidies. The slump ended, by most the storm was weathered, and European farming, by and large, has never been more prosperous than it is to-day. No honest observer who has seen both systems could deny that it is the African method of farming, and not the European, that is uneconomic. To-day it is the native who needs the subsidies and the immigrant (when it is not the British public) who is paying for them.

He contributes also towards the social services of the African, and provides the major source of employment. The Government can therefore reason that to develop European farming is to create greater wealth, some of which will help on African advancement, and that to provide farms for 350 new settlers will bring out more produce and bring in more revenue. To split up those farms among land-hungry peasants would produce nothing save more soil exhaustion and famine relief.

It can be argued that, had the Government paid less attention in the past to European needs and much more to the guidance of Africans, Kenya could have developed, like Uganda, as a native state. This may be argued *pro* and *con*; these lean highlands cannot be treated like Uganda's fat lakelands, nor had Kenya tribes reached the level of social cohesion attained by the Baganda. More might have been done, but all this has become irrelevant. The present must grapple as it can with a legacy of mistakes, procrastinations and intentions, good or bad, imperfectly consummated. As things are, no Government could better the condition of the people by holding back European farming or by

## AFRICAN CLAIMS TO WHITE HIGHLANDS

giving the land to Africans. Even revolutionary Russia had to take the land away from the peasants and farm it collectively, and that is more important as a technical fact than the doctrinal argument as to whether the big unit should belong to the State or to a landowner.

But should the African be denied the right to buy land in a part of the highlands of his own country? For that is the present position. The so-called 'White Highlands', defined by the Carter Land Commission of 1933, are set aside as a European reserve by an Order-in-Council of 1939, which allows Europeans to enjoy by legal right, within this enclave, the 'privileged position' they enjoyed by custom ever since the 'Elgin pledge' of 1906, a pledge confirmed since by several British Governments. In these 'White Highlands' (the townships are excluded) land cannot be transferred to men of other races, and a Highlands Board acts as watchdog.

It is not surprising that the Africans object, and wish to see the land thrown open to men of any race. (The fact that only Europeans own the land, or rather lease it from the Government, does not, of course, mean that only Europeans live there; in fact these Highlands, in the hands of little more than 2,000 landowners, support some 250,000 African 'squatters'.)

On the face of it, the position seems anachronistic and untenable. As yet, of course, few Africans could raise the money to buy a farm on the open market, or could manage it effectively if they could. Time may alter that, and even to-day syndicates of Africans could probably fulfil the first condition, if not the second. African co-operatives, if they ever catch on, might launch out into up-to-date, mechanised farming.

It has not, however, been fear of African encroachment that has made this small body of white farmers so determined to hold the Government to its promises, so much as the conviction that, were the Highlands open to all comers, Indians would crowd in, perhaps mainly for political reasons, and buy up the farms and in the end force out all the Europeans. Whether the new independence of India will change the political aims of East African Indians remains to be seen, but there can be no doubt that, in the past, Indian political leaders have sought to gain control. Some have spoken of East Africa as a future Indian colony. How would the native benefit, Europeans have asked, if the 'White Highlands' passed not to Africans, whose ability to develop them, if it exists, lies in the future, but to the Indians, who are ready to buy out the Europeans here and now?

So the 'White Highlands' remain white. For how long? That is a question none can answer. The farmers are determined to hand them

## KENYA

on to their sons and their grandsons. They point with some pride to their achievements, and with truth to the fact that within a few years, split into plots for Africans, fertility would bleed away and the land feed fewer people rather than more. Yet the black tide, hard-pressed and stirred, nibbles at the edges, looking into Naboth's vineyard which they call their own.

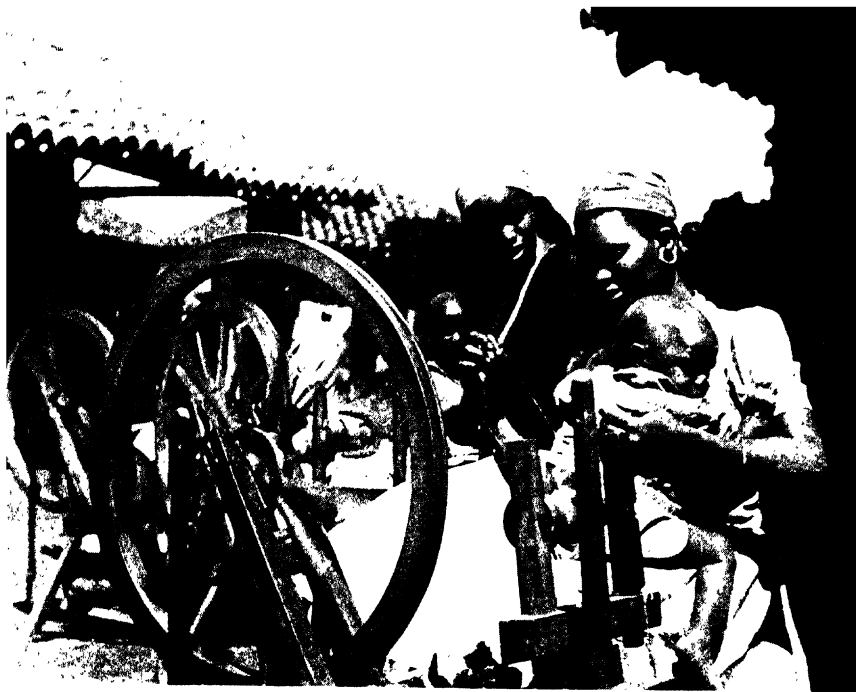
The 7,000,000 acres of this European reserve makes a jagged-shaped block, with a few scattered islands, little more than twice the size of Yorkshire in a country about two and a half times as large as Britain. (The native land units comprise rather more than 33,000,000 acres, an area somewhat larger than Scotland.) From this must come all the tea and coffee, the maize and wheat, the sisal and pyrethrum, and all the animal products—butter and bacon, meat and wool—which provide the sole exports of importance and feed most of those (a growing number) who cannot produce enough to feed themselves.

In these highlands there are patches as fertile as any in Africa, but they are no more than patches; the bulk is pasture-land, poorly watered and subject to drought, with a variable rainfall—good for ranching but often not for ploughing, certainly not for the hoe. The bulk of the best farming land in Kenya remains, as it always has done, in undisputed African possession in the reserves.

Such facts suggest that the limits of development, though by no means arrived at—and leaving big projects of irrigation aside—are not out of sight.

They suggest also that, even were the 'White Highlands' to turn black or brown, no solution of the Africans' rising Malthusian problem would be found. The demand is a political one. That is not to under-rate it. There are those who believe that the Europeans should compromise with the inevitable, yield now with a good grace what they will be forced one day to surrender, if they remain obdurate, with bloodshed and ignominy; and gain, while they can, goodwill for generosity, rather than hatred for privilege.

Others hold a contrary view: that to give way now would be to sell the pass and surrender all, to say good-bye to hopes of holding here a British bastion—and to open the way not to a thriving African democracy, but to the sinister intrusion of other forces and powers preparing even now to gobble up what we relinquish, and to feed on the chaos our retreat would engender. To give way now, they say, would be mere appeasement, and we all know the fate of appeasers, from the Russian lady who threw her baby out of the sleigh down to modern times.



School for spinners

A school for farm workers' children





Open-air milking on a settler's farm, Naro Moru

Kamasia cattle, stunted from prolonged over-stocking



## THE MILLINGTONS

The debate continues. As Winston Churchill remarked, in a book published 30 years ago: 'for in truth, the problems of East Africa are the problems of the world.'

On a green pasture like an orchard, and shaded by a leaning olive tree, Mr. Millington has scooped out a miniature amphitheatre. The grass steps surrounding it were crowded with young men in open-necked shirts and young women in slacks, gazing raptly at a polished Ayrshire cow standing with regal nonchalance in the ring. The sun shone, the scent of grass was sweet, the ground fell away to drop into a steep wooded valley, beyond and below lay a blue vista of far-off plains.

This was a Young Farmers' Club meeting. Beside the Ayrshire cow stood our host, a lean Shropshire farmer with a trim grey beard and a look of kindness and wisdom, dressed all in grey; and beside him stood a young farmer, explaining how to judge the points of the Ayrshire cow. The son of a leading settler, newly returned from America after taking an agricultural degree, he was heard with respect.

After the lecture we strolled about the sunlit paddock engaged in a competition to place in order of merit half a dozen noble cows. For my part this was pure guesswork, but even to the ignorant there is that about the purebred line that takes the eye, like a full-maned lion or a ship under sail. It is perfectly adapted to its function, but there is something more, a sense of rhythm, the shadow of perfection.

Tea was spread on trestle tables under the trees, but a sudden thunderstorm drove us into the neat grey stone bungalow, all of a piece with the farm buildings, unpretentious and adequate. Our host and his wife and daughter (this is very much a family concern) were kept busy answering questions about his famous Ayrshire herd, built up from small beginnings, whose young bulls go out all over Kenya. Pure-bred sires are still brought out from Scotland. The new one was on display: bulky as a tank yet nimble as a jeep, and worth over £1,000 in his homeland.

Cows and young stock grazed in paddocks, fenced with posts-and-rails, thick with a clover sward and shaded by tall forest junipers—cedars as they are called. Here at Molo we are 7,700 feet above sea level. On the bright green pastures set with dark green trees, with grey shingle roofs behind and blue distance beyond, these big red-and-white cattle look truly magnificent.

The Millingtons milk no more than 25 or 30 cows and do not strive after spectacular yields, but their cows keep up a steady output year



## KENYA

after year. (One has just completed an average of 950 gallons for nine lactations.) The farm is by Kenya standards tiny, by any standards small—150 acres. It is all paddocked. Nearby another small farm grows maize for silage, pulses and kale for fodder and oats for hay. Slowly the once-sour forest glades have been, by careful treatment, transformed into pastures as productive as any in the world. On such farms there is not an acre wasted.

"It's taken twenty-seven years," said Mr. Millington, "hard years, at times." He might have added that a relaxation of standards could undo it all in a couple of years.

We watched the dairy-boys wash their hands and the cows' hind-quarters, don their white coats and send the milk hissing into the pails. We saw the calves in their pens lunge soft noses into buckets to gulp their supper. Back at the house a rival attraction was the first brand-new Millington grandchild. He, too, was enjoying a rich supper of Ayrshire milk.

One of the saddest sights in Kenya is the Kamasia reserve. Scarcely a blade of grass remains, only stunted scrub. When you approach a herd of cattle you take them to be goats; their herdsman towers above them, and he is not a tall man. Yet you wonder how even these stunted beasts can scrape a living.

This is a straight overstocking problem. About three times as many cattle are packed into the district as the poor natural pastures are fit to carry.

Officials posted to the province started to write strong reports about Kamasia 21 years ago. Since then enough paper has been covered with pleas for action to mulch half the district, could paper be so usefully employed. The sole result was the advent of an Australian called 'Old Man Saltbush' with instructions to plant grass, which he did. Destocking was postponed, and so the work was wasted.

"Thousands of pounds were spent on reconditioning in the thirties," said the Agricultural Officer who showed me round, "and not one vestige remains of it."

Now, after 21 years, something is happening.

"At last we have a real plan," said my guide, after an interlude in which he pursued and shot a guineafowl. "First, we're taking a block of land and closing it to stock completely. The encouraging thing is that it's making an amazingly rapid recovery. Within a year we have been able to bring some cattle back, under careful control. We're not planting grass, but depending on natural regeneration. And it's quite

## YOUNG MAN SALTBUSSH

astonishing how quickly the star-grass comes back. Under proper management, we can double the carrying capacity at least."

This work is in charge of a Kenya-born youth who speaks the language—a son of Old Man Saltbush. Reconditioning Kamasia is becoming hereditary.

We found him in a hut in the wilderness, paying labour: a tall, fair-headed and one would guess single-minded young man, a product of the Prince of Wales' school. He took us to see a borehole being made. Water is not easy to find, and over half have been failures. One is a curiosity. A faint hissing sound comes to ear as you approach, and you see a kind of aerial shimmering. You throw a stick and it is lifted high into the air and hurled aside. This is a spout of carbon dioxide gas, tapped—instead of water—at 600 feet.

"We hope to harness it for power to run some of the pumping engines," Mr. Langridge said.

So far all the reconditioning has been carried out on some old European farms that were added to the Kamasia reserve to provide extra grazing.

"At present we're experimenting—discovering the right technique on about forty-seven thousand acres. After three trial years we shall go on to a pilot scheme of a hundred thousand acres in the reserve itself. All in all, it can't be done for less than ten shillings an acre at the very lowest. The whole of the two and a half million acres must be tackled. So after the pilot scheme's proved, the Kamasia must finance it themselves. How? Out of stock sales. A percentage of the money must be put into a reconditioning fund. We haven't got them to agree yet, but they're deeply impressed with the results of reconditioning. They *could* do it—in fact they must, or die of starvation."

All this could have been done 20 years ago for a fraction of the cost and effort. Now it is a twelfth-hour salvage operation. Twenty years ago there was no Development and Welfare Fund—from which this work is being paid—for hard-pressed colonies to draw on. The job can still be done if the men are given tools to do it, and allowed to see it through, and if the Kamasia continue to trust them.

## NAKURU

After frayed and queue-bound Britain, shopping in Nakuru is a delight. Everyone appears glad to see and anxious to serve you, which they can do without coupons. Only flour and sugar are rationed. (The sole exception to these friendly manners I encountered came from a handsome and surly young Sikh carpenter, who watched me extract

## KENYA

an arm-chair from the back of a car and, disdaining to lift it himself over the pavement, peremptorily summoned a 'boy' to carry it into his shop.)

This small farmers' town, its broad main street fringed with unlovely Indian and European bungalow-shops, is dominated by the tall modern building of Speke's the grocers', where fresh produce crowds the shelves in (to an English eye) astonishing profusion: butter, bacon, cheeses, jams, honey, pineapples, passion-fruit, cakes, hams, plums—everything under the sun, it seems. To-day Speke's biggest business is in food parcels for Britain. Down the street you can order as many pairs of shoes as you can afford, made-to-measure by Indians in a couple of days, or choose unrationed dress-lengths of imported (and expensive) cottons and silks.

Nakuru values its links with Britain. Mounted at the main intersection is a lamp-post from old Waterloo Bridge, presented by the London County Council. Nearby is a signpost reading: 'Nairobi 100 miles, Capetown 3,763 miles, London 6,245 miles.'

Below the town lies the lake, its waters bitter with soda and enclosed in craggy hills. A few miles of jolting over a rough track takes you to the white shore and to a dazzling view of pink flamingoes in their millions standing knee-deep in shallow glassy waters, their beaks half-submerged, filtering out their algal food with a peculiar soft muttering sound that fills the air like the whispering of a thousand tittle-tattlers. As you approach, some will rise in a rose-red cloud and wheel over the waters, glowing like fire against the purple hills.

Two years ago the lake dried up for the first time in living memory, leaving a sheet of blinding white sand. Hot winds whirled soda-impregnated particles through the town, and everything was harsh and gritty. Lying at 6,000 feet in the floor of the Rift, Nakuru is healthy but sometimes trying, what with the dry winds, the soda and at other times clouds of lake flies. At certain seasons there is a taut, highly-charged feeling about the atmosphere, sometimes reflected in the lives of the inhabitants. Then rain comes and all is green and pleasant, though the light volcanic soil will support only the ghosts of lawns and gardens.

Just out of the town, on a shoulder of Menangai, stands a long white building designed by Sir Herbert Baker as a Government European school. The majority of the 270 boys and girls must be boarders, coming in some cases from isolated farms a hundred miles away or more. Education for white children is compulsory but not free; boarders' fees at Nakuru, for instance—a primary school for children under fourteen—amount to £65 a year.

## THE EUROPEAN SCHOOL

Since white children in Africa must lack many of the civilising influences to which they are somewhat optimistically presumed to have access in Britain, Nakuru's headmaster believes that the school must compensate, as well as it can, by keeping high standards and a certain set of values before its pupils. He insists on tidiness, on self-help (the children make their own beds and generally look after themselves) and on a certain austerity; the day starts with a cold bath followed by 45 minutes of strenuous physical jerks, stripped for sunbathing, before breakfast. Academically, a Kenya education is closely modelled on a British one. Sometimes the colonial children's different background hampers them: a master recently brought back a collection of English coins to show his pupils, who regularly did sums in half-crowns and pennies but had never seen any.

"The mechanics of teaching, as I see it, are the smallest part of our job," the headmaster observed. "Here it's the influence on the children, the setting of standards, that counts for most."

That comes back to good teachers, and it is hard in these days to find young men and women of the right calibre. Most are recruited in Britain, but one or two of the best have been home-grown products, such as one we met: the Kenya-born daughter of a farmer and herself an ex-pupil of Nakuru who took a degree at Capetown University and returned to join the staff.

"We do our best to rub it into them that possession of a white skin carries no automatic claim to superiority," said the headmaster. "If they're to be leaders in Africa they must lead on merit alone. But it's the child's home that sets the tone, that shapes his attitude. All too often that is one of racial superiority. You can tell it sometimes in the tone of voice—a sort of nagging note creeps in."

Here at school the children are not allowed to give orders to Africans. They play Indian and African teams at football and hockey. The other day the band from a Kikuyu school performed here with great success. Whenever there have been protests, they have come not from the children but from their parents. After this party an indignant Afrikaner father came to complain that white children had been made to wait on Africans: this because the hosts had handed biscuits round to their visitors.

"He got no change," said the headmaster firmly. Mildly optimistic, he thinks the attitude, though far from perfect, has improved, and that no child could go through a Government school with the old assumptions quite intact.

At the Girls' High School in Nairobi to which most female Nakuru

## KENYA

pupils proceed (the boys go on to the Prince of Wales' school), the headmistress has promoted a lively liaison between her older pupils and those of the Indian Girls' School. Starting with discussion groups, it has reached a point where senior girls ask each other to tea and compare notes on marriage customs, film-stars and religious observances. This may fall short of friendship, but at least in later life such girls cannot regard each other as members of different species.

Here you come up against practical difficulty: there are as yet no African girls equipped to discuss such topics freely, and in English, with their white contemporaries. No doubt it will come, but most children base their hard, quick judgments on present facts and not on future aspirations.

Much to its own surprise, Nakuru was singled out by the Labour Adviser to the Secretary of State as having the best native housing of any small town in British Africa. As it is run mainly by its European citizens—the Municipal Board has fourteen members (six elected, six nominated and two official) of whom three are Indians—this was a matter for some local pride.

The latest three-roomed, stone municipal cottages are as good as anything in Nairobi and are going up for half the price; their grey shingle roofs are a pleasant change from red tile. For these, municipal employees pay no rent at all. But such superior houses (as houses go) can cater for only a small part of Nakuru's African population. The majority, as in Nairobi, live in 'hotelis' kept by individuals who rent a plot from the Municipality for 26/- a year, build mud-and-wattle, tin-roofed houses for themselves, and let off rooms.

We entered one such at random, the property of a self-styled Arab who lounged haughtily in his narrow veranda-shop beside dried fish and bunches of bananas. Behind his own quarters ran a roofless alley, and on each side opened out four rooms like loose-boxes, each inhabited by a young woman dressed in the printed cotton cloth and ridge-and-furrow hair-style of the Swahili, but in reality all Kikuyu or Nandi. In one cubicle the comely tenant, squatting on the floor, was eating with her fingers a savoury stew cooked on her little charcoal brazier. At the end of the alley was a tree with a home-made dovecote in its branches, and a colony of white pigeons.

The soft-voiced young women crowded round, friendly and self-assured—the heirs of leisure, the day their own. A couple of nights' takings will pay their monthly rent, the rest is theirs to spend on eatables, cotton goods or Nubian gin. Should they fall sick the clinic in

## A NATIVE BREWERY

the location, staffed by an heroic European sister, gives them free treatment with penicillin *ad lib*, and back they go with renewed zest. No wonder the profession is popular. Out of an African population of 9,000 men (in a large majority), women and children, the newly appointed town Welfare Officer made a rough count of 260 prostitutes—a minimum, for the dividing line between regular and casual is very wavy.

The Municipal Board caters for babies as well as for prostitutes. In its ante-natal and infant welfare clinic the European sister deals with about 5,500 yearly attendances—as against 8,800 in the V.D. clinic—and finds the number rising steadily. (All this is free.) She has noticed an improvement, slow but undeniable, in the health of babies; there is now no rickets, and it has become less usual to see a very small baby clutching a lump of fly-blown raw meat in its hand.

The social hall is the *pièce de résistance* of the native location. It has a parquet-floored dance hall, continually hired by clubs for festive evenings complete, as a rule, with cabaret turns put on by the 'Simba Scotties' in home-made kilts and glengarries. Next door is a clean and pleasant saloon bar, source of all the profits, which pay also for the location's water. A milk-bar is nearly as popular, though less paying, and the 'hoteli' will serve you with a plate of meat stew for 3½d. A note of culture is added by a small library and by six o'clock news broadcasts in various vernaculars emanating from Nairobi.

The brewery by which all this activity is supported shares the social centre's roof. It is one of the firmest of African traditions that brewers should be women—at Nakuru the fattest and jolliest old ladies you ever saw. Roaring with laughter and shaking like jellies, dressed in a sort of chef's uniform, they displayed their bins and vats where maize and millet are fermented. They are very muscular ladies, and it would take a brave customer to complain.

Nakuru has a bold town plan and plenty of ambition, but on a revenue of £20,000 a year you cannot build a modern Rome. Nor, with a European population of under 500 and rateable property worth only some £145,000, can you hope greatly to increase your revenue. The town grows, but that section which grows the fastest is the Africans', and at present Africans do not pay for their own bare services, let alone for the new ones of which they, and all the town, are in need. Industries are wanted: a shortage of water keeps them away. The sole exception lies a few miles along the Nairobi road, and makes woollen blankets, leather and soap.

The big mechanical mules and looms for turning Kenya wool into

## KENYA

soft, pleasantly coloured blankets (selling at 29/- each) is as up-to-date, the manager said, as anything to be found in his native Yorkshire; but more machinery is needed.

"We turn out four hundred blankets a day; we ought to double that. We can sell all we can make easily, and there should be a future for exports—there's nothing wrong with our quality. We need certain types of machinery, but manufacturers in Britain say they can deliver nothing for four years."

This Yorkshireman does his best with improvisations. Valuable lanoline at present goes down the drain with the scouring water, because he cannot get machinery to extract it. So he is trying, with some success, to get it out with an ordinary cream separator.

"People tell me it's impossible, but then people always say that! When I first came out here everyone told me I wouldn't be able to spin yarn because of the dry atmosphere. Well, I found you can spin and weave here as well as anywhere. But the dryness is hard on the machinery."

This factory employs about 350 Africans, mostly on machine-minding, a job they like. They work two shifts, and put in an eight-hour day.

"By English standards there's a high wastage and a very high labour turnover," said the manager. "You train a man for a job and off he goes for a year's holiday, or perhaps for ever. Thieving's our worst headache. In spite of constant watchfulness the pilfering that goes on is appalling. . . . Pay here is about double that on farms, and although we work longer hours it's popular. As for efficiency I'd say—very roughly—that we need two hands here for every one at home on a straightforward, routine job."

That is a high standard of efficiency by local standards. This the manager puts down to supervision—"it's much easier to supervise men in a factory than on a farm"—and to good feeding.

"We used to issue them with rations, but they made their posho into beer. Now we give them two good hot meals a day instead."

Two cars sat side by side in front of his office, one sleek and chromium-plated, the other old and shabby. He indicated the second for our transport to the tannery, which turns local hides into good-quality leather—too good, almost, for the local market.

"This one, of course. *I'm* not an Indian leather-buyer!" The customer, sleek as his car, emerged from the office, immaculate in well-cut fine worsted. "Most of the boot and shoe trade is in Indian hands." It would seem to be a paying one.

## THE K. F. A.

On the edge of the town stands the European hospital, a shining example of settler self-help. Over 1,300 members contribute to a family insurance scheme, and a voluntary unpaid board is in control. Hand-picked British Sisters are brought out on contract and must be ready for all emergencies, from a child who has swallowed the key of its father's car to a farmer blown up by dynamite, as well as for all the ordinary troubles, and for the birth of most of the large district's white babies. The level of nursing here is perhaps as high as England's best, the Matron a personality known and loved throughout the Highlands.

Plans are on foot to double the number of beds at a cost of £50,000, a large sum to be drawn from a small body of farmers and traders. The Government paid half the cost of the original buildings, but no calls are made on it for maintenance and the hospital is so far free from official control.

So, too, is the Kenya Farmers' Association down the road. This farmers' co-operative handles practically all the cereal crops, as well as other things like potatoes, pyrethrum and passion-fruit, produced in the White Highlands. It buys and sells in world markets, trades all over eastern Africa and deals with the produce of 80 per cent of Kenya's European farmers. All this has started from small beginnings, as a genuine co-operative in which the farmer-members hold shares.

This, and the Co-operative Creameries with their half-dozen butter-making depots in the dairying centres of the Highlands, proves that co-operation can be made to thrive even among individualists like Kenya's European farmers. There should be some hope that this fruitful plant, given time, may also take root among Africans.

A few miles out of Nakuru the road starts to climb the forested escarpment forming the eastern wall of the Rift. Up and up it winds among tall indigenous trees and then through clumps of intermixed bamboo, and on your left glimpses of the enormous valley display themselves through the branches far below. You emerge into a new land, cool, fresh and open, its grass-heads bent over by constant wind. Only in the gulleys which crease the face of this big-boned country do you meet with trees.

All around stretch pastoral uplands, candid in their bareness; a little reedy stream scarcely furrows the downs; quite unprepared, you come upon a secret pool guarded by cliff and tree and hollowed deep into the earth. This is Thomson's Falls, where the stream tumbles from a reedy bed into a rocky pool 220 feet below. From a small platform



## KENYA

you look down through the logs' interstices into a black swirling pool, and only the toughest stomachs can forbear to turn.

Beyond the falls, the country flattens out into a vast plain, and the rainfall is halved. Gone are the tufted grasses and spruce-leaved junipers; here are the dry stunted pastures of the veld and the wind-cut whistling thorn. The road drives straight across the plain, fringed by a sort of wild forget-me-not in full flower. Nothing checks the eye; away it ranges over a landscape wide as the sea yet speckled with twisted thorn-bush, a country that for all but a quarter of the year is bare and burnt, dun and grey.

On either hand the level monotony is broken by a gathering-up, as it were, of the plain into two enormous masses, both muffled in cloud: on the right the massive Aberdares, and to the left a concentration that might seem to be merely cloud-bank, until at dawn or evening a white peak glows suddenly aloft, pink-tinged (it may be) from a slanting beam of sunlight, and you know that the crest of Kenya shines there, high above these wide Laikipia plains.

This is a country of big ranches where merino sheep, imported in the first place from Australia, search a dry veld for edible shoots. Drought is the bane, and rainfall is not merely low but fickle. To plough this land, except for favoured bits of it, is next-door to impossible. Little humus binds the soil and at the first high wind (and winds here blow hard and often) most of it would vanish. In the long rainless season, most of the small and widely parted streams peter out.

Yet the owner of a ranch we visited—with its 50,000 acres one of the largest in the Colony—intends to make more and more use of the plough.

It is no simple matter. Here is no question of exploiting stored-up fertility; on the contrary, fertility must be created before crops can be sown. This may be done by grazing cattle more or less intensively—cattle fed on cake and other 'imported' foods which bring in elements of fertility from outside. So the soil may be built up, over perhaps 10 or 15 years, to a level where it will stand the plough.

To control the grazing of cattle you must have paddocks and to have paddocks you need wire. And wire simply cannot be got. Meanwhile some 2,500 cattle run out on the fenceless pastures, mostly steers fattening for market or heifers being raised for sale to dairy farmers, bred from pedigree imported bulls crossed with 'grade' cows having a mixture of native blood. They must make do on natural pastures which carry at the best a beast to 15 acres; could wire be got and the cattle grazed intensively, perhaps the pasture might carry three times as many.

## MERINOS AND HYENAS

So explained the woman owner's son: a young man recently turned from soldier to rancher and now in charge, with a single Dutch assistant, and settled with wife and children in a small house plumped down like a sentinel in the midst of veld and whistling thorn.

Life here could be lonely, one would think, with the nearest little town some 40 miles away, surrounded by plains that turn to black quagmires in the rains and in the hot season almost to desert, the grass bleached and withered, the earth cracked and friable, the wind dry. They did not seem to mind, perhaps because there is much to do, a constant coming and going in the hub of the ranch. We found our young hostess working on the minutes of a prehistory congress she had helped to take in Nairobi; pushing these aside, she rounded up for tea two small children, who seemed to find ample substitute for playmates in the life of the ranch. Gardening here is barred, unless under irrigation; even basic vegetables must come by rail from Naro Moru, the nuclear township 20 miles away.

Now the best rains for 12 years have fallen; and walking through herbage almost knee-deep, David Cole explained that the grass had grown away from his 7,500 high-grade and fine-woolled merinos, yet twelve months ago his predecessor had been forced to cut down the starving flocks by over 2,000 head—a dead loss. Ranching is indeed the trickiest of arts, more at the mercy even than farming of the luck of the seasons and always poised on a razor's-edge between disaster and success. A change of a penny a pound in the price of wool or sixpence in the costs of raising a calf to a heifer may make the whole difference between loss and profit.

"Our heaviest losses," said Mr. Cole, "come from vermin. Wild dogs pull down sheep in the open sometimes. And not long ago a heavy thunderstorm scattered one of the flocks. The shepherd—they're all Masai, some of them sons of men who worked for my father—failed to recover them all before nightfall and hyenas got forty of our best weaners in lamb to an Australian stud ram." (They practise artificial insemination here.)

Occasionally a lion is heard of, but lions have for the most part gone with the great herds of game that once had these pastures for their home. Driving for half a day to cross Laikipia, we saw one baboon sitting on a fence-post.

## NARO MORU

The Naro Moru is a river, well stocked with rainbow trout, that chatters down a stony bed from Mt. Kenya's glaciers. It runs at first

## KENYA

through heavy forest. The dark undergrowth is starred by the vivid orange flowers of a *thunbergia* and the delicate pink and white blooms of a balsam; ferns spring from the forks of trees, maidenhair from mossy stones beside the stream. Where undergrowth thins out to form a grassy glade, elephants have rubbed bare patches on the bark of lichen-bearded *podos*. Winds blow cold off the glaciers and a morning mist comes down from heath and forest to drench the vegetation and chill the body, and to raise a smile at the expense of the equator, said to run through the bar of the Silverbeck hotel outside Nanyuki, some 20 miles away.

Below the forest's edge, open pastures roll away to meet the plain. Before the sun rises behind Mt. Kenya, the western horizon reddens beyond the Aberdares and throws into relief the crest of Kinangop, cut off from the plain below by a sea of mist as iridescent as a dove's breast. Bands of colour lie across this western horizon—red and black, grey and pink, peach and lavender; the plain takes the light reluctantly, as if holding on to the night's coolness. Behind you the snows of Kenya, suddenly close, are sketched against a hardening sky, startling in their ivory whiteness. Then the sun comes up and the plain lies open, the mists ascend to shroud the Aberdares, and slowly the great peak of Kenya hides an icy nakedness in the day's cloudy garment.

Against such majestic scenery, cows tethered to stakes stand to be milked in the open, and a tractor chuffs its way to a field of barley. Two partners own this 4,000-acre farm. One puts up the money, the other the skill and work, and all these elements are needed in good measure to turn this stretch of sour, windswept mountain-side into a productive concern.

We stood in a field of barley and watched a young farm pupil, fresh from the Prince of Wales' school, and three or four Africans load a wagon of green barley to fill a mobile silo, made of reed matting, run up near by. This will make rich feed for the cattle, but is a poor fate for the grain.

"You should have seen it in February," said the owner sadly. "A beautiful crop, one hundred and twenty acres of it—worth perhaps a thousand pounds. First a hail-storm flattened it and then rain fell for weeks, unheard-of at that time of year. We lost nearly all of it. I borrowed sheep to graze the stubble, and now there's a lovely self-sown crop. We shall try again in September."

That is farming all over, but it was forgotten as we stood knee-deep in a pasture full of clover and a certain dwarf sorghum being tried as a quick-growing pasture crop, and compared this lush green herbage

## LABOUR'S DECLINING EFFICIENCY

with the poor natural veld grass, hard and tufty and unpalatable (here a species called *pennisetum schimperi*) which formerly covered all the farm, and still occupies the major part that awaits its turn for treatment.

"We know next to nothing yet about the grasses—which are best for this land, quickest-growing and most drought-resistant. All that lies ahead." Pasture improvement grips its practitioners almost like a disease.

The wagon full of green barley moved slowly across the field against an immense backdrop of plain and purple mountain and a sky piled full of grey and violet clouds. A brilliant sun sparkled on the glossy coats of a herd of heifers grazing just below. For their benefit the partners have sunk a borehole yielding 20,000 gallons a day, enough to water the whole farm if only they can get piping. Like wire, it can scarcely be had, and grows yearly more expensive.

"Our plan is gradually to bring nearly all the land under the plough," said Joe Prettejohn. "First we must fence it. Before the war that cost thirteen pounds ten a mile. Now the cost has risen to fifty pounds. Part of that increase is due to the price of wire and posts, but even more to the greater inefficiency of the labour. Fencing is done on piece rates—so much a yard. The task set to-day is half that which we set before the war. And yet the boys are better fed."

Tractors have replaced working oxen on this farm, as on all farms whose owners can afford it. Mechanisation is at once offering greater opportunities to Africans and cutting down demand for labour. A tractor-driver who draws perhaps 70/- to 80/- a month, plus his food and housing, makes half as much again as a teacher, and at least four times as much as an ordinary 'shamba boy'. A farmer we visited in Solai runs 1,200 acres, almost all under crops (last year he sent away 7,500 bags of wheat), with only 24 African 'regulars'. This is the modern trend, but capital costs are high and ever-mounting.

Here at Naro Moru unskilled labour is still needed, but hard to get. The owners can no longer spare land for 'squatters' and their wasteful, disease-carrying livestock. The 'squatter system' is sometimes condemned as an example of exploitation, as indeed it is—but exploitation of the land rather than of Africans, who in a good many cases have done very well out of mining the soil and pastures of careless and irresponsible employers. (A recent survey found that some squatters were making as much as 3,000/- a year in cash from the sale of crops off European land.) Now the practice on many farms is to ban squatters, but to invite permanent hands to bring their families, and to

## KENYA

provide those who do so with gardens to supplement the rations they receive.

The Mount Kenya herd of high-grade Shorthorns, Mr. Prettejohn's achievement, is a product of pedigree bulls bought always from the same Dorset breeder, and the practice of artificial insemination, which has been followed here for nine years.

This method is cheaper than nature's, and makes fuller use of the best bulls; but it has its snags. While the master was away at the war, one of the bulls spread unobserved a disease which caused abortion, and which for some time defied diagnosis. Damage was widespread until an Italian P.O.W. vet identified the agent, hitherto unknown in East Africa, and the trouble was brought under control. The moral is that the very closest and most unremitting care and supervision is needed if artificial insemination is to succeed.

If it seems to the layman a little sinister, a forerunner of babies out of bottles and the 'gamma race', vets and practical farmers dismiss such notions, no doubt rightly, as frivolous; and the Kenya Government has set up a central insemination station for the benefit of 'small men' who cannot afford pure-bred bulls. Potency now goes by post in test tubes to sire calves hundreds of miles away, and by such means no doubt the herds of East Africa will be bettered.

## KARATINA

There has been a market here for generations. To see the profusion of goods on offer under the giant fig tree in the centre you would not credit stories of soil depletion. Here are the fruits of a land of Goshen. Here, literally, are milk and honey, green peas and sheep's fat, eggs and tomatoes. Kikuyu swarm like ants over a space dominated by the ancient fig-tree where sacrifices once took place for rain and victory.

Now the old tree looks down on rows of African-owned dukas where young men are shaved or drink tea and eat buns, and where they may buy anything from a bicycle to a newspaper in their own tongue. Beyond are rows of go-downs where their produce is stored, and uniformed inspectors prod away at sacks of grain and piles of wattle-bark to grade and pass it to the buyers. The market-masters who keep order and see that all is fair are servants of the Local Native Council.

Beyond shops and go-downs, over towards that icy peak floating lightly, for all its bulk, in a blue sky, rises a tall chimney, and a building of corrugated iron glitters in the sun. This is the Karatina Dried Vegetable Project, established by the Government early in the war to export perishable food in durable form for the Forces.

## UNITED COMPANIES OF MUMBI

A year ago, the wheels whirled and stacks of potatoes, carrots, beans and other vegetables were sliced, washed, and fed into big moisture-repelling drums, to end as desiccated but nourishing shreds. The factory, kept at full stretch, was paying out the tidy sum of £10,000 a month to the vegetable growers—all local Kikuyu small-holders. The Government issued free seed to any would-be grower. Moreover it had organised irrigation in a number of small valleys. The owners of this land were making fortunes, by local standards, out of the produce of these irrigated bottoms, which wore a look of designed prosperity rare in Africa.

Now the factory is silent, its chimney cold; the irrigation channels are dry. The industry has been killed. This was a political murder, not a natural death. And the story illustrates sharply the present mood of this suspicious, tortuous-minded, ambitious and sharp-witted people.

When the war ended, the market for dried vegetables ended too. But the Government was anxious to keep alive this source of wealth for the Kikuyu (in 1945 it paid out £145,000) established at no small expense to the British taxpayer. They tried to interest several British firms in the prospects of turning it over to vegetable canning, at first with no success at all, because of a general dubiety about markets. At last, however, they found a firm willing to make the experiment.

The land on which the factory and its labour quarters stand had been leased to the Government by the Local Native Council, with the consent of the owners, for the duration of the war and one year thereafter. Now the end of the lease was approaching and the owners began to demand the return of their land.

At the same time thousands of demobilised soldiers were returning: familiar sights in their slouch hats and dangling cigarettes, clustering at every teashop and duka, they cast about for profitable outlets for their gratuities, and where two or three ex-soldiers gathered together a 'company' was born. Soon these 'companies' had sprung up everywhere like lilies after rain—but quite often giving out the rank odour of unorthodoxy—and some of the leaders had organised a loose association called the United Companies of Mumbi, meaning 'the mother of companies' at a rough translation.

The United Companies of Mumbi then offered to buy the dried vegetable factory from the Government for £30,000.

What, exactly, they would have done with the factory was never clear. Some spoke of canning, brushing aside the need for expensive new machinery and for technical skill and commercial experience possessed by no member of Mumbi. Others proposed to let the factory

## KENYA

space to little 'companies' for small village industries of unspecified scope and nature.

The high-ups of the Government were perhaps too soft-hearted, or too conscious of their responsibility, to let nature take its course. They knew that where powerful firms with world-wide markets and resources had turned thumbs down, a loose collection of Kikuyu 'companies', totally without trading experience, technical skill or financial resources, could not hope to succeed. They knew also that men of straw—'some of the biggest stiffs in Kikuyuland' as I was told—were embroiled in the concern. And they knew that if they sold the factory to Mumbi, thousands of ex-soldiers and peasants would lose their gratuities and savings.

The Governor, the people were told, 'was not prepared to sell Government property knowing it could only spell loss to the Africans who bought it'. So the United Companies of Mumbi were turned down.

Instead, the Government made another offer. The single European company interested was willing to go in with the Kikuyu on a fifty-fifty basis to form an Anglo-African company. Of the capital, 49 per cent was to be European, 49 per cent Kikuyu and 2 per cent Government; on the board were to sit three representatives of the firm, three of the Kikuyu and one of the Government.

A conference was summoned in Nairobi to which came representatives of the United Companies of Mumbi. They rejected the proposal. To justify their attitude, they put about one of those stories which travel like bush-fires: that the British company's plan was to seize all the land for five miles round Karatina. So swiftly did this rumour fly that the Agricultural Officer working on the irrigation heard it next day at Karatina.

Meanwhile the ordinary vegetable-grower's point of view had been lost sight of; but it was clear enough. The ordinary vegetable-grower wanted the factory to remain. It was his livelihood.

In a last attempt to save the project, the Government summoned a public meeting at Karatina. To it came the members of the Local Native Council, representatives of the United Companies of Mumbi, the Chief Native Commissioner and about 2,000 of the local inhabitants. The members of the L.N.C. had already asserted privately that they themselves wanted the factory to stay, but that they dared not stand up to the popular feeling engendered by the hotheads of Mumbi.

The Chief Native Commissioner presented the case squarely to the people and put before them three questions:



Main road in the rains : Fort Hall to Embu

View on a farm







A baraza in Kamasia

Clerk to the Justices : Native Tribunal clerk, N. Kavirondo



## A RUSSIAN REPLY

1. Do the people of Mathira [the name of the location] wish to stand by the agreement made in 1945 and set aside the land for the factory approved by the Local Native Council at that time?

2. Do the people of Mathira wish to continue the factory under a mixed European-African company?

3. If the answer to (2) is yes, do the people of Mathira want the United Companies of Mumbi to represent them or do they wish to form their own association?

After a two days' delay, the Government received a Russian double: no, no.

So to-day the factory stands idle, its machinery silent, and in due course its little plot of land will no doubt revert to maize or potatoes. The young Agricultural Officer who started the irrigation, condemned to see his three years' hard work wasted, resigned in order to return to practical farming.

"They're regretting it already," he said, not without a certain *schadenfreude*. "One man I know made two hundred pounds in cash out of his share of the irrigation last year. This year he won't make a penny. Before I left, potatoes were rolling up to Karatina—beautiful potatoes—and the Indian traders just shook their heads. There's a local glut already, and insufficient rolling stock to ship them all to Nairobi. I'm afraid I couldn't resist saying: 'M'm—pity the factory isn't working any more.'"

Thus, in a sad grave of suspicion and political manoeuvre, ends a genuine bid to start a new industry and raise the peasants' standard of living. No doubt the Kikuyu, like everyone else, must learn the hard way that to cut off one's nose hurts the face. Unfortunately they then blame the European for the injury.

## EMBU

One of the sights of Embu is a school that was 'under consideration' by the Government for 13 years and built by the local people in 13 days.

It is not, perhaps, a building of great elegance, but there it stands, of mud and wattle, and in it some 35 boys pursue their studies under a Makerere master. Their parents and other citizens, grown weary of being told by an equally disillusioned D.C. that plans for the promised junior secondary school awaited final approval, at last came in a body with wattle poles and thatch and simply built the place, without any exchange of money.

## KENYA

Meanwhile, on grind official mills; nearby, stone houses are at last going up for teachers. One day the real school will arise, costing thousands, or by that time perhaps tens of thousands. The boys will have desks with fitted inkwells, stone dormitories and w.c.s. Will they have a better education? Will the wisdom of the same teacher deepen and expand in costlier surroundings? It is to be hoped so; yet, hearing of schools to cost £50,000, one recalls that Athenians (in a climate somewhat similar, though harder) held discourses under trees.

Mr. Jeremiah Nyagah, the Embu teacher, showed us round with pride. He had edged the paths with a small red-flowering plant and, with the boys, cleared from the bush a school garden. This is his first headmastership, and three weeks ago he was married. Of his own house, as yet barely furnished, he remarked:

"It is too small; I have only three rooms."

"I agree with him," the D.C. remarked. "My own house has only three rooms also, and I have two children." His tin-roofed wooden bungalow was run up when the station was founded about 1907 and has scarcely changed since, except to decay. But it has a fine garden with green lawns and tall trees and magnificent beds of cannas under irrigation.

Embu lies under the forest line on the eastern slopes of Mt. Kenya. Yet within an hour's drive you find yourself in a land of tufted grass and the red-flowered *erythrina* tree on the verge of plains which run down to the hot, tsetse-ridden valley of the Tana. Here dwells a tribelet called the Mberi who send representatives to the Embu Local Native Council. Once they built stone terraces and held their soil, but did not learn how to keep its fertility; now the land and its terraces are abandoned and the people must buy food from Embu—a lesson, if one were needed, that terraces are not enough. They are, however, a beginning, and propaganda here has been so far successful that three-quarters of the district is reckoned to be 'terraced' with contour banks.

Everywhere in the new and well-planned markets, ex-soldiers are opening small shops which can offer little but a few packets of local tea, a few bars of local soap and perhaps some bottles of paraffin. No amount of discouragement will stop them applying in their hundreds for licences either to trade or to run 'taxis'. Already the roads are churned to bits by far too much heavy traffic. (On the way from Nyeri we sank in the middle of a lake on the main road, which is choked with embedded lorries.) Yet applications continue to pour in and grievances to multiply as more and more are turned down by a somewhat wayward Transport Board in Nairobi. It was not, perhaps,

## A COFFEE-PLANTING CLERK

one of the Government's brighter efforts to sell to Africans hundreds of surplus army lorries with one hand and refuse subsequently to license them with the other.

The clerk in the D.C.'s office, supporting his application for a rise of pay, included, in a list of necessities, petrol and car expenses to enable him to drive to work, spurning the bicycle.

He is a coffee planter, part-owner of a 'taxi' service and secretary of the local Coffee Growers' Co-operative. Embu is one of the two districts in Kenya where coffee growing, once prohibited, is officially encouraged. As yet it is on a small scale, for during the war all the effort had to go into food crops, and now progress is inhibited by lack of trained staff; but it is spreading. The largest planter, a chief, has over 2,000 trees—about four acres.

The clerk showed us his shamba of healthy-looking trees, each one carefully weeded and box-terraced.

"My trouble is labour," he explained. As a professing Christian he has but one wife, and she is kept busy, being even now well advanced with her sixth. "Shamba boys are hard to get and when you get them they will not work. My head shamba boy I have had for years. I gave him one week's leave and he stayed away for six weeks, so I fined him five shillings and then he left." This clerk would have been at home at any settlers' meeting.

This co-operative is a minnow compared with the Chagga whale, but it embraces all the local planters (116 in number), has set up a pulping station to which members bring their cherry, and binds its members to carry out all the correct cultural measures. The Agricultural Officer has powers to see that this is properly done. Here is a case where care and caution count for more than speed, for a false step would at once set European planters against the scheme and discredit it in the eyes of local Africans, who were none too keen in the first place to plant a crop so slow and exacting. There has been no open white hostility; in fact the crop is sold to the Kenya Coffee Planters' Union. Last year it amounted to little more than three tons.

Embu is unsophisticated and out-of-the-way compared with districts in the main stream further south. Distrust of 'foreigners' from Kiambu and Fort Hall who are pushing in as tenants (one local chief is said to run his car on a 60/- levy on each tenant) keeps out most of the Kenya African Union's agents; even Jomo Kenyatta has been coldly received. Yet even here, so far from Nairobi, one is told:

"The morality of the young is the real problem. Not merely sex morality, though that's fundamental; in the old days, if a boy had sex

## KENYA

relations before circumcision both he and the girl were killed with sharp stakes; to-day he might get three months from the tribunal for 'breach of native custom'. So of course immorality's rampant and the young men hang about drinking and amusing themselves. They won't work, and when it comes to paying tax they dun their fathers or take to petty theft. The authority of the elders is something they just laugh at nowadays. . . ."

Some old customs take modern forms. We were warned about a new kind of *hongo*<sup>1</sup> rife in these parts. Your car sticks in the mud; you seek help, and are stung for 40/- or 50/-, to be paid before a back is bent in your favour, or £5 if your conveyance is a lorry.

We feared the worst, therefore, when our car at last sank (after several narrow escapes) into a quagmire on a by-way somewhere between Embu and Fort Hall. Help appeared in the shape of the inmates of a bush school, neat-looking in their shorts and shirts, and led by a stalwart spectacled young master. They made up in numbers what they lacked in size and had us out in no time. Seeing us fumbling with coins the teacher advanced, and observed with a spirited primness:

"Madam, we do not wish for baksheesh. We are Boy Scouts."

We drove off without a cent changing hands. This is the only time I have ever known money to be refused by the Kikuyu. It was impressive, and the shade of Baden Powell (who died close by at Nyeri) would, I think, have been satisfied.

## FORT HALL

Even in Kenya, Kahuhia and Waithega missions are remarkable. At the latter, you gaze from the point of a bluff over a deep wide valley and then across a series of green ascending ridges to the sweep of the forest, broken and magnificent; and then up to the rounded heath-clad ranges of the Aberdares, their black rocky summits hidden in cloud. The bluff juts out like the prow of an enormous ship; away the country tumbles on all sides to infinity, green and red and blue with distance, and then at the farthest extremity of sight the white peak of Kenya hangs in the air, light as thistledown and eternal as creation, drawn with the delicacy of a Chinese painting against an opalescent sky. All this is Kikuyu country, 5,000 square miles of it, encircling the mountain on three sides.

On one such green ridge, its sides feathered by wattle, stands a small hospital presided over by Lincoln Njogu (the elephant), a mainly self-

<sup>1</sup>The name given to tribute exacted in the old days by tribesmen from caravans passing through their country.

## DR. LIKIMANI

taught doctor. Our visit was unheralded, and he showed us round with pride and modesty; all was simple but clean and orderly, and one could sense that a measure of discipline (perhaps the rarest quality among Africans) lay behind the organisation.

Dr. Lincoln is not a doctor, only a 'Medical Assistant' trained for three years in Nairobi's native hospital and now in sole charge of 40 beds. This is a satellite of the big hospital at Fort Hall, 20 miles away, and an ambulance calls twice a week to remove the serious cases; but when the earth roads will not bear an ambulance, Dr. Lincoln manages.

"I love surgery," he said. "I perform operations of all kinds. I have five dressers to assist me and five midwives I have trained. We average a delivery a day. I am on call night and day, and treat sixty out-patients daily on the average. Yes, I am always busy, but I enjoy it." And indeed he looked as if this were so. He is the king of his domain, the new witchdoctor, the keeper of the secrets of life and death. Yet because he is not Makerere-trained he cannot rise higher than the humble grade of Medical Assistant.

In the main hospital at Fort Hall another outstanding African doctor practises his art. Dr. Likimani has won the Makerere diploma and is said to be as skilled at surgery as any of his European colleagues. The son of a Masai father and a Kikuyu mother (often a creative cross), a tall, sturdy man with excellent English, his home is among his herds of cattle in Masai country, his ambition to study in England.

"The truth is, he can't be spared," said his European senior. "It's almost impossible to keep pace with a population increasing in numbers and in health-consciousness at the same time."

The new maternity ward and the baby clinic are the busiest places of all. Here, as in Kavirondo, I saw the tiny white-haired victims of malnutrition with their spindly legs and pathetic wasted bodies—here, in this land of plenty—and once more heard the doctors blame ignorance before poverty.

"A balanced diet calls for balanced farming. We need more milk, more proteins, more cattle. . . ." A familiar story!

The Fort Hall district, with its 230,000 people, is well advanced in the battle with soil depletion. An energetic D.C. and Agricultural Officer have planned and put through a model campaign of voluntary effort, based on a native form of land control long neglected and overlaid.

Before the old social order weakened, control of land was vested in the elders of family groups or clans, who acted as trustees on behalf of their kinsmen. These elders allocated new shambas, and decided what

## KENYA

duties should be communally discharged; they called out age-grades to open paths and sent warriors to guard salt-licks. They spoke not as autocrats but as representatives. Kikuyu methods were always democratic.

With the coming of the European the chief, a Government official, gathered to himself the power and the prestige. Later on, the Local Native Council and the Native Tribunal drew away some of the chiefs' powers. The old hereditary authority of the clan elders was quite eclipsed; customs governing the use and disposal of land fell into decay. Cultivation in groups for mutual aid died out, and with it a rough system of rotations. Individualism crept in.

Official policy at first encouraged this, believing that 'the magic of property turns sand into gold'. And when it works, these hopes are justified. Here and there 'model farmers' show what can be done with industry and a willingness to take advice. At Embu we visited one such who farms eight acres, half under improved grasses; who keeps cows and gives milk to his children and last year sold off 27 pigs; whose maize, grown twice only in an eight-year rotation, yields at the rate of 15 bags to the acre; who lives well and perhaps makes about £150 a year clear profit.

After 20 years, such men are still rare exceptions. As a rule shambas are too small to allow the practice of a proper system, more often still their owners too backward-looking, too indolent or too anxious to squeeze out the last drops of profit. By and large, the situation is well summed up in one of Mr. Norman Humphrey's stern reports:<sup>1</sup> "There is a complete breakdown in the old agricultural system. Shifting cultivation, primitive as it may have been, was at least something distinct from chaos. Not even this mild commendation can be applied to the present state of affairs."

Some say that only when African lands have gone through a process, harsh as it may be, analogous to that of the English enclosures, will stability return. Others trust to a revival of communal responsibility. And that is what is being attempted at Fort Hall. In each location, a committee of elders from each of the nine clans who hold land in the district now directs communal unpaid labour much as it used to do, but under official sponsorship and to a new end. For the most part this is the making of 'terraces'—deep ditches with high banks following the contour. Each committee calls out the entire local population, male and female, twice a week.

Guided by a D.C. newly posted to the district but an old hand at the

<sup>1</sup>*The Kikuyu Lands*. N. Humphrey and H. E. Lambert, 1945.

## CHIEF IGNATIO

Kikuyu—one of the few who speaks their soft, tricky language really well—I watched a group of people at this task, so familiar to them in its older guises that they have a word for it: *ngwatio*, communal help. They were digging with a will at deep ditches pegged out for them by Agricultural Instructors across a hillside.

"This terracing has caught on far better than any of us at first believed possible," said the D.C. "There's real enthusiasm for it—and competition between the different locations."

"The aspect of the scheme which appeals so much to the people," the Agricultural Officer remarked in a report,<sup>1</sup> "is that it is being run by themselves with only indirect control by Government."

Chief Erastus took us to his new office to show how each month the area 'terraced' in each location is totted up, and the order of merit arrived at. There are no prizes other than kudos, and the talk of the market-place. Last month Erastus' location came second with 275 acres. (The total was 1,330.) Chief Erastus, a former teacher at the Scots mission, seemed an alert and level-headed man, literate though not English-speaking. Before taking office he had, he told us, founded the Poultry Egg and Supply Company which had a shop in Nairobi and dealt also in fish; now the business is carried on by relatives, but he still operates a 'taxi' service to Nairobi, like (or so it seemed) almost everyone else.

The star location is Chief Ignatio's. Strolling at random through heavy crops, we came everywhere on deep ditches full of tall maize, and on high banks planted with sweet potatoes. Ignatio's own maize looked especially thick and sturdy, and beyond it lay three paddocks knee-deep in Rhodes grass carrying better than a beast to the acre. Round his house grew citrus trees, pigs rooted in a fenced-in yard, a rough milking-shed had been erected. In all he had about 10 acres.

"I am a poor man," he averred, shaking his head and talking of the costs of children's education. (He has six so far, the three eldest at boarding school; "my daughter is at Limuru, and for her I must pay one hundred and five shillings a year; children cost much if their father wishes to see them educated; it is for them that I must cultivate this shamba.") His chiefs' salary is only £6 a month, but that, no doubt, is a sort of basic ration. His well-furnished and spotlessly clean house was full of straw mats and baskets made by a neat-fingered daughter at the Roman Catholic mission. As we walked round, a minion followed behind wheeling his bicycle.

During the morning we passed several *ngwatio* parties at work,

<sup>1</sup>J. Hughes Price in the *East African Agricultural Journal*, April, 1947.



## KENYA

singing cheerfully. The diggers were mainly women, with a sprinkling of elders. I did not see a single young man at work with pick or *panga*; and when I asked Ignatio what had become of them all he shrugged his shoulders.

"They have gone to *tembea*"—to walk about, by implication to stroll, to gossip, to hang round market-places and beer-parties.

"Over half the young men," added the D.C., "are living outside the reserve."

"At work?"

He smiled. "A few. But stand any morning on the main road and you'll be passed by fleets of 'taxis' crammed with young men going to spend a day, a week or a year in Nairobi—living by their wits." And indeed we saw, even on small side-roads, several bus-loads of young bloods in soft hats and sports jackets, and others swinging along the path with canes in their hands and white feathers at a jaunty angle in their woolly hair. It seems as if the younger Kikuyu are turning into a generation of spivs. There is no direction of labour.

How do they get the money to live without working? The prevalence of crime is one answer. Gangs operate mostly in Nairobi, but keep their hand in with local practice. Recently the tyres were stolen off a lorry locked in a garage. The police, warned in time to give chase, pursued the thieves' lorry along the narrow twisting road; as they drew close they were suddenly blinded by powerful lights. Their car swerved off the road and crashed. The thieves, perhaps making good use of an army training, had mounted spotlights on the back axle of their lorry.

Over 4,000 ex-soldiers—scarcely any of them fighting troops—have returned to this district alone, and a full-time ex-officer is in charge of their resettlement. What, I asked, are most of them doing now?

"Well, they join secret societies. The other day, for instance, I came on a group of several hundred sitting on a hillside deep in some discussion—probably about licences to trade or to run taxis. Of course they faded away when I appeared. These chaps just love secrecy."

Such a *penchant* is obviously a gift to the peddler of subversion, who has only to show his wares behind a cloak of clandestinity to make them irresistible. And secret societies are a part of Kikuyu tradition. Mystery surrounded initiation into each of the four grades of elders, a cabalistic cult adored a supernatural river-reptile from whose beard a hair had to be snatched on its annual appearances, the country was full of magic stones that struck dead anyone who set eyes on them. With 'enlightenment', belief in such phenomena yields to beliefs no

## KANDARA CENTRE

less esoteric which spring up like toadstools in these fertile, labyrinthine minds, to whom the notion of honest toil is often anathema.

Of course not all the ex-soldiers have turned into thugs, spivs or secret plotters. At a market we found a clean, well-built stone bakery turning out a hundred loaves a day and run by twenty young men who had pooled their gratuities. They were prospering, they said. 'Companies' abound, the market was full of lorries trading in fruit or poultry, wattle-bark or fish, each with an imposing title painted on its side. Never before has so much money flowed in these regions, or the display of duka goods been so meagre.

The indiscipline, idleness and corruption of so much Kikuyu youth is so great a problem that one feels authority to be baffled. Partial remedies are being tried. A Welfare Officer promotes sports and football, and now a committee runs things on its own account and handles gate money. Also there are dances. Many traditional dances have fallen into disuse, either because the Missions condemned them as obscene or because of the young men's wish to be done with old customs. Present policy is to revive many of them and to encourage the invention of modern ones, now that the new nationalism is making these old customs more respectable.

And then social centres are everywhere planned or in course of erection. We visited one such at Kandara, a market town of the future, with information room and tribunal hall and houses for welfare workers and clerks half up, and a brand-new school in operation under the direction of a merry-faced young Makerere teacher, John Chege, handsomely clad in tweeds made and cut by a weaver and a tailor already at work in the embryonic village. The new buildings were better than those of most English schools, the pupils alert and spruce, the gardens deep in the weed Mexican marigold. One of the brighter lads recited faultlessly in English a poem beginning: 'Never be unkind to a fairy;' and then slew his Tinkabell with the solemn declaration: "I do not think that there are fairies."

John Chege pointed out to the D.C. mud plaster flaking from the walls of an old building, still in use as a dormitory.

"Will you arrange a communal turn-out for the re-plastering?"

"Let the boys do it themselves."

"No, that falls on the chief."

The D.C. broke into his fluent Kikuyu (what a difference it makes when the man in charge speaks the language; the people's whole attitude seems to lighten and kindle), and the two fell into an argument. Self-help does not seem a popular doctrine here.

## KENYA

Chiefs of the older generation regard such appeals with extreme disfavour. In their young day, before a European had been heard of, they did not beg help from their fathers. Ready themselves to snatch up spear and shield on the instant to defend the clan's cattle, they might not touch beer, they obeyed their elders and no one set lock or guard on his property. Good manners and obedience were at the core of conduct, disgrace and death the penalties for deviation. The district's senior chief, Njiri, can remember those times. Now he is deputy chairman of an L.N.C. with nine elected and eight nominated members, and has received the M.B.E. for 40 years' loyal and honourable service.

In his boyhood, life was harder than it is to-day, but never so hard by half, in this favoured land, as for the men of Northern Europe, where civilisation grew slowly from a long struggle to subdue the forest, which taught endurance, and to survive harsh winters, which taught prudence. Here, with no winters, with a warm soil yielding a twice-yearly harvest, the struggle was infinitely milder and the qualities of endurance, forethought and sustained exertion, because less necessary, so much the less provoked. (Other qualities, more appropriate to the situation and perhaps more amiable, replaced them: hospitality, for instance, and a love of leisure.) In the forests of the north our own ancestors had to toil or starve, and often did both: Kikuyu ancestors were by comparison dilettante toilers, and managed to delegate most of the routine to their wives. They trusted to the luck of the seasons to dodge starvation rather than to their own prudence.

Believers in Toynbee's theory of challenge and response might well ascribe the failure of civilisation to generate itself in these generous tropical latitudes in part, at least, to a lack of stimulus from the environment. Life here was perhaps too soft, too easy, to draw from the people those flinty qualities needed for the spark's creation.

Has European intrusion brought the necessary challenge? The mental stimulus is undeniable, and goes deep. (Toynbee holds that the challenge may be too great, so as to overwhelm, as well as too feeble.) On the material side, however, our effect is to weaken still further the environmental challenge. Benign paternalism makes the soft softer, the mild milder, the call for qualities of application, endurance and forethought virtually inaudible. Chief Njiri's generation had to fight for survival, and that needed self-discipline and courage; John Chege's needs only to argue and to threaten, which require neither. Njiri has

## RAMPANT CRIME

a poor opinion of the younger men. But then, old warriors always think the country is going to the devil.

Meanwhile officials who must somehow remain masters of this intricate and highly-charged situation—indeed a feat of tight-rope walking—do not despair.

"We can't prevent trouble," said Mr. Coutts, an able, intelligent and far from complacent Scot. "All we can do is to get out and about, deal with every little difficulty as it comes up, and settle disputes quickly and fairly. If we don't make too many mistakes and manage to keep a jump or two ahead, we shall slowly get on top in the end."<sup>1</sup>

"I chose Kenya," he added, "because I thought life would never be dull. And I haven't been disappointed!"

## NAIROBI

Congestion in the capital has become worse than ever, hospitality remains as warm and unconfined. Boat-trains arrive crammed with newcomers, hotels are packed and harassed, citizens are collecting food and money for English flood-victims while the road up-country is impassable owing to floods; the general strike has receded, potatoes and whisky followed suit. Crime flourishes; even the shawls have been stripped off a newborn baby, and people's trousers are enticed away while they sleep by 'pole-fishers' armed with long, hook-tipped bamboos thrust through the metal screens fixed on every window. Garages are selling caps for petrol tanks fitted with locks.

Nairobi is like a balloon floating high aloft but stationary, where Europeans are overworked, well-meaning and important, and the rest of East Africa a distant blur. Everyone has his own ideas of what is going on down below, but no one can actually see it happening, or has the time to descend and find out.

And so it is congenial to leave the human race of 1947 to its own dubious devices and take up with the human race as it was, or as we think it was, some 120,000 years ago. To do this one has merely to enlist the help of Dr. Louis Leakey and to visit Olgoresailie, about 40 miles south on the plains of the Masai.

<sup>1</sup>Since this was written Mr. Kenyatta and other political leaders called on the people of the Fort Hall district to refuse to allow their women to turn out for terracing. At the same time an attempt was made by some of the younger element to oust certain chiefs, including Ignatio, who had co-operated in the soil conservation campaign. Terracing came to a standstill and the chiefs' lives were threatened. These troubles culminated in a riot in September, 1947, at which the police were forced to open fire and one man was killed. Four of the ringleaders, including two members of the L.N.C., were sentenced to six weeks' hard labour for their part in the affair. Six months later, terracing was still at a standstill in the Fort Hall district.

## KENYA

We stood in the baking heat on earth hard as a shield, squinting against the mid-day glare. Everything was drained of colour, the air's dryness made us brittle-skinned. A hot wind was harsh with gritty particles.

"Here," said Dr. Leakey, leading us through gusts of wind on a counter-gust of enthusiasm, "here is the spot where my wife made history. We were looking round, one morning, without a clue to what was coming. She went one way, I another. Suddenly I heard a shout. I ran towards her; I came to this very spot we're standing on now; I looked—I couldn't believe my eyes! I was gazing at the richest find of prehistoric hand-axes in the world!"

With a showman's artistry he halted his party at the climax and waved a hand. We directed our gaze on to the ground. It was littered with rather large flat pebbles, but that made it in no way remarkable. Concealing a calmness born of ignorance, we stooped to examine black chips of lava, each one, it seemed, a hand-axe or cleaver fashioned by some hairy artisan dead more than a thousand centuries.

Soon Dr. Leakey had us grappled to the chariot of his informed imagination. We halted on the shores of a great lake. A river half a mile wide poured from a flooded Rift Valley across these now desiccated plains, and at this point spread out into a wide sheet of water. On the shores lived the makers of hand-axes, huddling for shelter in caves and eating raw (they were ignorant of fire) the flesh of the strange animals they hunted. These were of the same sort as our beasts to-day—pigs, baboons, hippos, horses—but very much larger.

How, we wondered, could men so primitive master beasts so large and fierce? For answer Dr. Leakey led us to a small roofed shelter above a trench which he described as a 'museum-on-the-spot', and showed us, embedded in the gravelly soil, several groups of three round stones, each about the size of a cricket ball.

"These are bolas stones: the first clear evidence that Acheulean man, who lived in the early stone age, hunted with these weapons. (They're used to-day by certain tribes in Patagonia.) Each of the three bolas stones is tied to a thong of a different length, and the three thongs knotted together. You then approach your prey and hurl the bolas, and the whirling stones entangle up its legs in the leather thongs. Then you rush up and finish it off with a hand-axe."

The Leakeys, man and wife—she is no less of an archæologist than he—have found bones of all these animals: pigs, baboons and giant zebras or horses. These early stone age men cracked the bones to get at the marrow. They must have lived in camps—herds, almost; and

## GORGOPS AND THE MASAI

clearly Olgoresailie is the site of a sort of hand-axe factory. Nothing is known of their appearance, for as yet no human bones have been found.

"The reason? They wouldn't have buried their dead, and if you've seen what a modern hyena can do to a skull, you can easily imagine what would happen when it was a giant hyena!"

We sat under a shelter eating sandwiches in a hot and gritty gale that rasped our faces. Louis Leakey, seated cross-legged on the ground with his hair standing up on end and gnawing at a drumstick, might almost have been an illustration to his own vivid commentary. The illusion would have been more complete had he seized a piece of sharp bone and, with a few hard wrist-flicks, pared away a piece of black basalt, too tough for the builder's chisel, to make a hand-axe, just as these Acheulean men did on this very spot so long ago. It looks like magic; but I have seen him do it. A knack, he calls it, and surely one that needs extraordinary skill.

Olgoresailie has been scheduled as a National Park. Before this could be done the Masai had to be persuaded to 'set aside' half a square mile of their land. At first they would not hear of the proposal. Dr. Leakey invited a party of elders to visit the site. When he assured them that the ground on which they stood had once been an enormous lake, they put the question we all want to ask: 'How do you know?'

They were not convinced by sections that revealed to the initiated a series of extinct lake beds and some ten different beaches or 'land surfaces' on which men had left their mark. By good fortune the Leakeys found on the bed of this extinct lake the skull of a giant hippo, by name *gorgops*. Bringing to the scene the skull of a modern hippo, he compared the two. This convinced the Masai elders.

"If there was indeed a hippo here," they agreed, "there must have been a lake, as you said. We see now that you are not lying; you shall have the land." And he did.

In Nairobi's Coryndon Museum, of which he is Curator, the Leakeys have arranged diagrams and photographs to show very clearly the significance of these hand-axe finds, and the fluctuating history of Olgoresailie. The lake has dried up and re-formed at least three times, as pluvial periods, roughly corresponding with Europe's ice ages, came and went. We are now in an inter-pluvial, on the downward slope of a dry cycle. If climatic history repeats itself, we shall get drier still. Lake Victoria has disappeared completely at least twice in its history. There is no reason, however, why Africa should not get wetter again, though perhaps not for 10 or 15 thousand years. Man has survived

## KENYA

many cycles and will no doubt survive more, though not without inconvenience.

The Coryndon Museum houses also what the Leakeys consider their most important find. This is the jaw of a man-like ape or ape-like man discovered in 1942 on Rusinga island, in Lake Victoria, and called *Proconsul*.

To a layman a jawbone, like a hand-axe, is not especially revealing, but this *Proconsul* jaw was the *pièce de résistance* offered to distinguished scientists from 15 countries who attended the recent Prehistory Conference in Nairobi. The lower Miocene beds in which it was found embedded, place it as one of the earliest relics ever found of what Leakey calls "a near approach to a form of ape-like creature from which the human stem eventually was evolved".

Playing for safety, the Leakeys tentatively put the age of *Proconsul* at about 6,000,000 years.

"The Conference," said Dr. Leakey, highly delighted, "kept pushing the age back and back. I think the most general estimate is now twenty-five to thirty million years."

Louis Leakey has been saying for a long time that East Africa, not central Asia, was the true cradle of the human race. As an East African, born and raised in Kenya, he was by some thought to be biased in favour of his native land, but this conference of experts was his vindication.

Between *Proconsul* of Rusinga island and the bolas-hunting, bone-cracking men of Olgoresailie lie a matter of 20 or 30 million years. Between the Olgoresailie hunters and the Masai who disturb their dust, improved in looks and using fire and iron but in other ways not perhaps so vastly different, lie some 120,000 years. Ten million years hence there may yet be men of some kind on these plains and by these lake fringes, though meanwhile the lakes may have vanished and been recreated, the plains turned to deserts and back to swamps and then to plains again.

Seen against such a background, to-day's problems and controversies must shrink to something near their true proportion. Twenty million years from *Proconsul* to the stone age, 100,000 from the stone age to modern times, and 50 years of British rule in eastern Africa. Yet in that half-century, the lessons of all recorded history are supposed to be well on the way towards delivery and assimilation.

Flying back over the hills and plains and mountains of this loveliest of countries, one gropes for conclusions without reward; it is all too vast, too quickly-changing, too inchoate. The questions buzz all round

## REFLECTIONS ON COLONIAL POLICY

one's head. Is this a place, like Palestine and India, where Britain has attempted the impossible? Can you change natures moulded over centuries by their environment in the wink of an eye? Can one race pass on to another its own experience? Can any halt be called to the disintegrating pull of racialism? In a world where the last surplus is that of goodwill, can suspicion be stilled or interests blended? Can you create unity out of discordance ever, save by the slow fusion of history?

Even were all the answers negative, that would not be to damn the attempt as wasted. Men and assemblies of men make efforts, when all is said and done, not to meet the wants of others but to fulfil needs of their own. The British effort is something the British are impelled to make by inner forces, not by entreaties from without; something undertaken, unaware no doubt, to heal a conscience roughened by memories of slavery and exploitation, not in response to any African demand. (Africans might have fared better and enjoyed security for longer, like Gauls and Britons in the days of Rome, had independence never been deified.) Ours is a policy of sublimation, not of common sense. Its failure, if in the material sense it should fail, would be partial and perhaps illusory, since its real object is less to turn dreams into a reality than to shake an incubus off the back of the soul.

Must it then outwardly fail? A traveller is not called upon for prophecy, nor to define failure. We run a race with time: on the one hand our good intentions, our needs and our resolve to re-make and enlighten; on the other, the natural and gathering impatience of the half-educated, fed on the vapour of our own philosophy, to be done with an alien ruler. One thinks of poor Lucrates in the inn at Memphis, in peril of drowning when the man he has created, ordered to draw water, will not desist, until the whole room is awash; even to saw him in two is unavailing; the spell that roused the spook will not control it. He was saved by his master; but where are we to look for Panrates?

Whatever the outcome, we are changing Africa; and matters there had reached an *impasse* of sterile adjustment where change was called for, disruption necessary. From the rubble of their social order Africans, like the citizens of bombed towns, will mould the bricks to build themselves a new habitation.

It is perhaps a weakness that our aims are the aims of idealism (even though we do not always live up to them) while the approach is that of the materialist. We wish to change men for the better; we seek to do so by bettering their health, their diet, their houses, their laws, their grasp of technique. It may be that we are dazzled by these necessities, that they are not enough. May it not be argued that only one thing



## KENYA

can raise us all, and that is virtue; that in the long run only one victory matters, and that is over ourselves? He would be a bold man who held that in virtue and in self-discipline the African was strengthened by his contact with the West.

The aircraft's manœuvres over the bleak mountain heights of the Mau soon drive such thoughts from one's head. A thermos of coffee appears; two new-born tortoises, each carapace beautifully streaked and banded, need to be wrapped against the cold; a little later, the roofs of Kisumu shine up through the clouds. A green dot in an arm of the blue lake may be Rusinga island. No doubt *Proconsul* had his problems, 30 million years ago. He evidently overcame them in the end.

THE END



DATE OF ISSUE

**1 JUL 1940**

This book must be returned  
within 3, 7, 14 days of its issue. A  
fine of ONE ANNA per day will  
be charged if the book is overdue.

---

